

THE
HISTORY OF MEDIÆVAL EDUCATION

AN ACCOUNT OF THE

COURSE OF EDUCATIONAL OPINION AND PRACTICE FROM
THE SIXTH TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURIES, INCLUSIVE

BY

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PREFACE

The publication of this volume completes the series of lectures on the history of education given by Prof. Williams at Cornell university, and the first appearance in English of histories of ancient and mediæval education. Although issued after the author's death, the manuscript was so careful and matured and exact that it has been easy to present his record just as he wrote it. In so doing the publisher feels that he has made a distinct and needed addition to educational literature.

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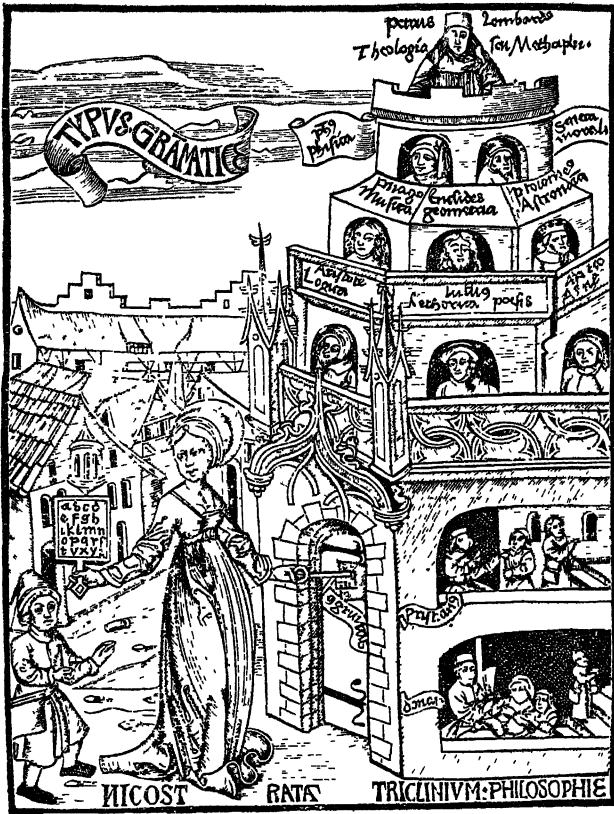
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History of Mediæval Education

The cut on the opposite page is taken from Cubberley's excellent Syllabus of Lectures on the History of Education (Macmillan Company, 1902), which gives the following explanation:

"An allegorical representation of the progress and degrees of education, from the 1508 [Bâle] edition of the *Margarita Philosophica* of Gregory de Reich, substantially the same as in the earlier editions. The youth, having mastered the Hornbook and the rudiments of learning, advances toward the temple of knowledge. Wisdom is about to place the key in the lock of the door of the temple. Across the door is written the word *congruntur*,—all agree. On the first and second floors of the temple he studies the Grammar of Donatus, and of Priscian, and at the first stage at the left on the third floor he studies the Logic of Aristotle, followed by the Rhetoric and Poetry of Tully, thus completing the *Trivium*. The Arithmetic of Boethius also appears on the third floor. On the fourth floor of the temple he completes the studies of the *Quadrivium*, taking in order the Music of Pythagoras, Euclid's Geometry, and Ptolemy's Astronomy. The student now advances to the study of Philosophy, studying successively Physics, Seneca's Morals, and the Theology of Peter Lombard, the last being the goal toward which all has been directed."



MEDIEVAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION SUMMARIZED

MEDIÆVAL EDUCATION

CHAPTER I

EARLY CHRISTIAN, SARACEN, AND BYZANTINE EDUCATION

We have seen that during the imperial rule at Rome, there was no lack of attention by the better classes to what may be termed secondary and superior education; that under favor of some of the wiser superiors, many large civil schools were scattered widely over the empire, not a few of which attained a reputation that has come down to us in at least a name; that in many cases aid was granted to these schools from the imperial treasury, and also, to certain of the high teachers, valuable exemptions from taxes and military service; and that in these schools were taught grammar including literature, philosophy including dialectics, and in some of them, law and medicine. Such schools were especially numerous in Italy, Spain, and Roman Gaul. The teachers were either pagans or indifferent to religion; and on this account, the schools were less and less resorted to by the rapidly increasing Christians, who were besides at the outset most largely recruited from the poorer classes with whom school attendance had probably not been common. "In the very heart of the schools,"

says Guizot speaking of the 4th century,* “there was an entire absence of liberty; the whole of the professors were removable at any time. The emperor had full power, not only to transfer them from one town to another, but to cancel their appointment whenever he thought fit. Moreover, in a great many of the Gaulish towns, the people themselves were against them, for they were Christians, at least in a great majority of cases, and as such had a dislike for schools which were altogether pagan in origin and intention. The professors accordingly were regarded with hostility and often maltreated; they were, in fact, quite unsupported except by the remnant of the higher classes, and by the imperial authority which still maintained order.” To this statement may be added that the higher classes, to whom the schools must look for support, sunk in luxury and effeminacy, had lost all taste for learning, and hence were little strenuous that their sons should be educated. It is not surprising therefore, that in the 5th century the civil schools everywhere showed decay, that their efforts to attract students through knowledge made easy by abbreviations and epitomes failed of success, and that in the 6th century they died out totally, having grown out of touch with the spirit of the times both Christian and pagan.

The ten centuries which intervene from 500 to 1500 A. D. are usually called the Middle Ages, and the first six of them may not inappropriately be called the Dark Ages in Western Europe, having been illumed

*History of Civilization in France, Lecture 4th, which should be read entire in this connection.

only by a transient and local gleam of light in the age of Charlemagne. The power of Rome died out, quite as much in consequence of the degeneracy of life and manners as of the inroads of the barbarians. While Rome retained her pristine virtues, such inroads had wrought only temporary injuries; but now in her degeneracy they brought wide-spread ruin, which yet held concealed within it the germs of a better civilization. The ages which succeeded the downfall of the Western Empire were marked by tumults and disorders, such as were incident to the breaking up of polities, and to the infusion, absorption, and general amelioration of barbarian elements, preparatory to the formation of new states. What seemed like final dissolution was only incubation. For ages everything is in a state of perpetual flux; new hordes of barbarians hurl themselves upon the partially assimilated and domesticated earlier swarms; kingdoms rise like bubbles, and like bubbles burst and disappear; violence prevails; laws are silent; industry languishes; and learning has no encouragement; yet during these times Christianity spreads rapidly, and is accepted by the barbarians with as great avidity as by more civilized races. This was the hopeful element in the situation.

It was wholly natural that men whose earthly condition was wretched and precarious should grasp eagerly at the hope of something better beyond the grave. It was equally natural, in the circumstances of the times, that the pure and simple doctrine of Christ and his apostles, should become clouded by superstitions, and disfigured by corruptions. Hence

religion, on the one hand, grew into the form of an unlovely asceticism, which however had most important effects on learning and education; on the other and larger side, it assumed the shape of a great temporal authority. The church of Christ, who had declared that his kingdom was not of this world, gradually became a hierarchy, and for ages was the sole power whose behests had somewhat general influence among men. This was doubtless a fact which, on the whole, had a beneficent effect on the condition of Europe during the ages of darkness and confusion.

Such being the condition of the times, whether considered from the religious or the politico-social point of view, there is little reason for surprise that they were characterized by dense ignorance, as well among the nobles as among the less-favored classes, and that this ignorance was but slightly mitigated even among the large majority of the clergy. The testimonies to the prevailing ignorance amongst all classes and at various epochs, are too abundant to leave any room for doubt. Contracts even for the sale of land were made verbally from the lack of notaries. Charters were signed with a cross because the highest personages did not know how to write. Charlemagne strove when emperor to learn to write; "but," says his friend Eginhard, "the work too late begun had little success, —parum prospere successit." Were it needful, it would be easy to multiply testimonies to the dense ignorance that prevailed during several centuries.

The causes of this ignorance are not far to seek. Besides the violence and uncertainty of the times which, it may readily be conceived, offered conditions highly

unfavorable to the spread or even the preservation of learning; and besides the correlated lack of ready and safe intercourse of communities with each other, whereby knowledge might pass from hand to hand, there were other very obvious causes for the prevalence of ignorance.

1. First of all may be remarked the general worthlessness of what stood in the place of literature. The dislike of the early Christians for their pagan oppressors had presently extended itself to their literature, which was distrusted besides on account of both its origin and the mythology that it embodied. Hence in the early centuries they deliberately cut loose from the culture of the past, and, to avoid the dangers that they feared, they separated themselves from the stores of knowledge gained by the experience of the ancient world. Henceforth the few who could read were limited mostly in their choice to monkish homilies and to the theological polemics which sprung abundantly from the frequent religious controversies of those times. This, as may be supposed, was a kind of literature neither very fruitful in point of culture, nor very likely to entice men to overcome the difficulties of learning to read for the sake of perusing it.

2. Aside from the Bible, not only was the available reading matter mostly worthless, but whatever books there were, were very scarce and very dear, very much rarer and dearer than they were in Rome under the empire, when they were copied by skilful slaves and sold at moderate prices. During the Middle Ages, not only was the cost of transcription enhanced, but the material on which books were written, papyrus and

parchment, had become very costly and difficult to obtain. From both these causes, books could be procured only at immense prices, a very weighty cause of the prevailing ignorance.

3. Add to this that even these costly books were written in Latin, the only tongue then in common use for literary purposes; that, of the numerous brood of dialects that were springing up, none had become sufficiently developed or sufficiently predominant to warrant its use in books until the latter part of the Middle Ages; and that hence, even when books could be obtained, they were utterly unintelligible to the vast majority of the people,—and we shall find little reason to wonder at what might otherwise seem to us the almost incredible ignorance of all classes during several centuries.

4. Another consideration that seems worth naming in this connection, is that for a long period, the very idea of the need of any education seems to have been totally lacking. The peoples of a cultured origin had forgotten the tradition of any book knowledge; whilst many more, sprung from barbarian stock, had never had any such tradition. The clergy set little value on it, the warlike nobles despised it, the masses knew nothing of it.

5. As if these causes which tended to make ignorance unavoidable were not enough, an additional one came into prominence in the 9th century, in the spread of the feudal system. From its own nature, in combination with the manners and spirit of the times, it added *isolation* to the other causes which intensified ignorance. The feudal families lived shut up

in their strongholds, around which clustered villages of their dependents, ministers to their wants, and victims of their caprice. From their castles, the barons often issued for purposes of violence and rapine, making all travel especially perilous; whilst their dependents were shut off from intercourse with similar communities by barriers of the most rancorous hostility.

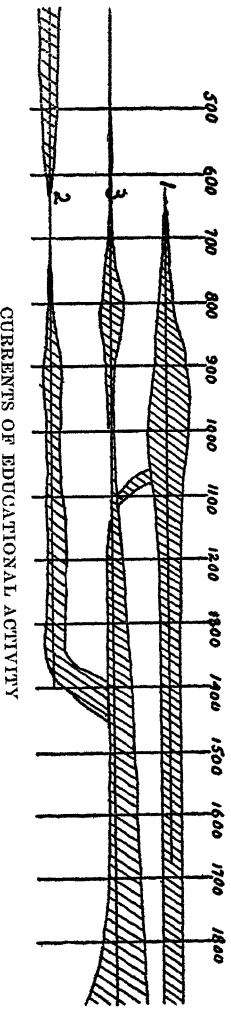
When these several obstacles to learning are considered together, they will materially aid us, as well to form some conception of the condition of things during that portion of the Mediæval period which is called the Dark Ages, as to understand some of the chief influences which either caused or intensified the barbarous ignorance by which they were characterized. The means of culture found their chief resource in monasteries. Macaulay says: "Had not such retreats been scattered here and there among the huts of the miserable peasantry and the castles of the ferocious aristocracy, European society would have consisted of beasts of burden and beasts of prey. The church has many times been compared by divines to the ark of which we read in the book of Genesis, but never has the resemblance been more perfect than during the evil time when she alone rode, amidst darkness and tempest, on the deluge beneath which all the great works of ancient power and wisdom lay entombed, bearing within her that feeble germ from which a second and more glorious civilization was to spring."

Through these ages, however, dark as they may appear to be, may be seen flowing three distinct currents of educational effort, which for centuries were wholly independent of each other, but which ulti-

mately assumed most important and interesting relations, to the great benefit of learning. These were 1st the Saracenic current which, beginning in the East in the 7th century, extended in the 8th to Spain, where it attained its greatest volume in the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries, and even exerted a reviving influence on the barrenness of Western Europe; 2d that of the Byzantines in Eastern Europe by which the old Greek learning and literature were preserved to bear new fruit among the western nations; and 3d that of Western Europe which, though at first very obscure as learning, finally drew into itself reanimating streams from both the other currents, wholly absorbed the Byzantine current in the 15th century, and has since been flowing on with ever-increasing volume and force. These currents of educational activity with their relations to each other and their fluctuations in the several centuries, admit of a graphic representation as in the accompanying diagram, in which (1) represents the course of Saracenic education, (2) that of the Eastern Empire, and (3) that of Western Europe. An attempt has also been made in (3) to indicate approximately the main direction of educational progress by expansions above and below the central line.

We will first describe the Saracenic and Byzantine efforts at intellectual progress, both because of their greater brilliancy during much of the Middle Ages, and because they throw light on the later culture of Western Europe.

Of the culture of the Saracens, it may be truthfully said that it was most brilliant in the ages when Western Europe was in Cimmerian literary darkness. In



CURRENTS OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

the enthusiastic words of Karl Schmidt,* “In the time when, together with the fall of the Western Empire, its culture also was falling into uninterrupted decay; when barbarian inroads were sweeping over the West bearing with them confusion and destruction; when Christian priests were preparing proscription lists of heretics, and waging a destructive warfare against classic literature, so that it was forced to take refuge in the cloisters in which the ancient manuscripts were mechanically copied;—in this night of the spirit, the arts and sciences, nourished by Islam, shone out like a beam of light which should rekindle the human spirit also in the West. From Mohammedan Spain Europe received its impulse towards and its first acquaintance with the sciences of nature, especially with Optics and Astronomy, as also with Architecture. The Mohammedan Theology became the model of Christian Scholasticism.”

Elementary education began soon after the death of Mohammed, if not before,—an education in reading and the Koran, and this has been continued to the present time in schools attached to the mosques. To these soon succeeded higher schools for the wealthier classes, and colleges for those who craved a thorough training, under teachers of logic, philosophy, theology, and medicine. The arts and sciences spread rapidly amongst the Mohammedan nations, and were encouraged by the caliphs. The treasures of Grecian science, and the philosophy of Aristotle, translated from Syrian versions, were ransacked to add to their resources. Thus they became skilled in the logic and philosophy

* *Geschichte der Pädagogik*, Vol. 2d, p. 102.

of Aristotle. They cultivated Astronomy with success, erected many observatories, made tolerable astronomic measurements, amongst these determining the earth's circumference at about 24,000 miles; but they adhered to Ptolemy's theory of the solar system, and debased the science by mingling with it Astrology. For Medicine they showed special aptitude, and in this during the Middle Ages they were everywhere acknowledged as authorities. They had translations of Galen and Hippocrates, to which some of their writers added much of value, and the medical school of Salernum doubtless owes its origin to one of their pupils, Constantine of Carthage. The science of chemistry they originated—some of its names are theirs—though they also perverted it to a vain search after a means of transmuting base metals into gold; the invention of gunpowder in the 13th century is also with much probability ascribed to them. They had translations of the Greek mathematics, Euclid, and the algebra of Diophantus. Algebra was greatly advanced in their hands by Mohammed-ibn-Mousa who carried equations through the second degree;* and Europe received from them its knowledge of the decimal notation stamped with their name. The literature and language of Greece however they seem to have disdained, gaining their knowledge of its science solely through translations by Christians and Jews, to both of whom they extended a degree of toleration and even favor elsewhere unknown during those times.

Much of this surprising scientific progress had been made within two centuries succeeding the death of

* *Histoire Generale du IV Siecle etc.*, Vol 1, pp. 785-6

Mohammed. The celebrated caliph, Haroun al Raschid, the contemporary of Charlemagne, did much to encourage education, by founding schools and libraries, by causing translations of Greek works, and by sending large numbers of learned men to make scientific journeys. Other caliphs founded academies like those of Bagdad, Bokhara, and Damascus, provided them each with a library, and paid the salaries of their teachers.

But great as is the interest attaching to the intellectual activity of the Saracens in the East, it is to the Arabs in Spain that Europe became chiefly indebted. In the last half of the 8th century, as the result of a fierce struggle between two royal families, Abdarrahan of the line of the Ommeyades, escaping from the massacre of the residue of his family save one, fled westward through Africa, made a lodgment in Spain, which had already yielded to the Moslem arms, and established there a flourishing Saracenic empire. The kindly alliance then formed with the Jews, by whom the Moslems had been materially aided in their conquest, endured according to Gibbon until both were driven out of Spain seven hundred years later, and was in marked contrast with the inhuman treatment which this unhappy people suffered elsewhere in Europe. Whilst in other parts of Europe confusion and lawlessness reigned, in Moslem Spain peace and order prevailed; the arts and agriculture flourished; industry was secure of its fruits; and education was so universally diffused that it is said it was difficult to find in Andalusia a person who could not read and write. Famous universities arose like those of Cordova, Se-

ville, Toledo, and Salamanca, to which a few studious youth from Italy and Gaul, like Gerbert and Arezzo resorted, undeterred by the tales of necromancy which ignorant Europe told of the sciences that the Moslems there pursued.*

A rich poetic, romantic, and philosophic literature so greatly flourished that the learned Oriental scholar Deutsch asserts that in the library of one of the later caliphs there were over 400,000 books, mostly by Spanish authors; and this statement is confirmed by a very recent author in the *Histoire Generale*, Vol. 1. Karl Schmidt gives the number as 600,000, but the smaller number is sufficiently incredible, and affords a sufficiently vivid contrast to the literary poverty of Christian Europe in those ages. Deutsch states that the prototypes of many European legends, like those of the Cid and Arthur of the Round Table, as also the metres of poems of Dante and Petrarch, are traceable to the Arabic poetry of Spain and Sicily.

The highest point of Mohammedan culture in Spain appears to have been reached during the 10th century. Up to this time there had been an equal toleration of all religious beliefs; but in the succeeding ages there occurred an outburst of religious fanaticism, the result of wars with Christian Spain and of change of dynasties, by reason of which literature and learning declined to some extent; yet when driven from Spain, the Moors as they were called were still evidently far more enlightened than their bigoted enemies.

Besides the remarkable intellectual activity displayed by the Saracens in the cultivation of science

* Schmidt-Geschichte der Pädagogik, Vol 2, pp. 111-113.

and literature, and in fostering schools, academies, libraries, and universities, they produced on the shores of the Caspian, about 1060 A. D., a Moslem Solomon in the person of the royal author of the Book of Cabus; and in Spain in 1190, an educational prototype of Rousseau in Ibn Tophail.*

The Book of Cabus was written by a father for his son and heir, giving him wise counsels for the sciences he should master; for the virtues which he should make habitual in his practice, and the prudence that belongs with virtue; for the bodily exercises in which he should be skilled, and the moderation that he should observe in these as in all other parts of life; for the interest that he should manifest in all the vocations pursued by his people, since a prince should have knowledge of all that concerns his subjects; and for the manner in which he shall hereafter train up his sons and daughters. A brief passage on the treatment of children, which is curious in itself, may serve as a specimen of the style of this treatise. "Should the teacher beat thy son, show no over-drawn sympathy with him; let him be beaten; for children learn sciences, arts and good manners only under the rod;—that is they learn only from fear of blows and of the teacher's chidings, but from nature or of their own impulse learn they nothing." The divergence of this advice from that of the Greek and Roman theorists is not more obvious than its coincidence with the ideas of Solomon in regard to the treatment of children. Great emphasis is laid on the knowledge of the one only God in so far as he may be known

*Schmidt Gesch der Pädagogik. Vol. 2, pp 114-124.

through the study of man who is his image, and of the world which "He created not wantonly but that He might show forth His justice and excellence, and which He adorned because He knew well that beauty is better than ugliness and riches better than poverty." Hence in the opinion of this author "religion is the loftiest and most excellent of all sciences. It is a tree whose roots are the belief in the only God, and whose branches are the law." "Therefore," he says, "apply thyself diligently, my son, to the knowledge of religion, for it is the pith of the tree of which the rest of the sciences are only the twigs."

The fundamental idea of Ibn Tophail is that a human being without any intercourse with his fellow men, and so without the inculcation of any positive religious or other ideas through education, could, by dint of the ordinary experiences which nature thrusts upon him and by natural inferences from these, attain to a true knowledge of nature and of God. Hence he imagines an illegitimate son, born of a king's daughter and committed to the waves immediately after birth in a little ark. He is driven upon an uninhabited island where he is nursed by a doe. Living here amongst beasts and birds, he learns to subordinate himself to nature's laws, and to fashion for himself clothing after the example of his brute associates. From observation of the special, he attains to general ideas. From the organization of living beings and from their unseen life-energies, he conceives the idea of an invisible Power who originates life; and from the *unity* and order of the universe, he convinces himself that this unseen Power is *one* and is intelligent. Furthermore,

by reflecting on his own spiritual operations, he arrives at the idea that as this thought-power in himself, which while using the experiences of the senses still transcends them, is incorporeal, therefore God must be a spirit. Such is a very condensed sketch of the work of Ibn Tophail, which like Rousseau's is couched in the form of a romance. When we come to study Rousseau's *Emile*, it will not be difficult to see that, whilst some of the ideas of this moslem work are curiously analogous to those of *Emile*, the divergences are greater than the resemblances. The idea in both of isolating the pupil from his fellows, and subjecting him wholly to the influences of nature that he may be objectively taught by the experiences of nature, is well-nigh the sole point of contact and is especially striking; but with this, both resemblance and analogy end. The ideas of the two men as to the course which intellectual, moral, and religious development takes in the human being under the influences of experience, have little resemblance. Fanciful, however, as the educational scheme of the Moorish author may appear to be, it is hardly more fanciful or impracticable than that of the erratic Frenchman, save that the latter substitutes a paragon of a tutor as a companion for the child, in place of the beasts and birds of Ibn Tophail.

Literary Activity of the Byzantines

The mediæval Byzantine learning was the lineal successor of that of the ancient Greeks. After the extinction of paganism, and the closing of the "schools of Athens" early in the 6th century, the old Greek studies were mostly restricted to some of the monasteries and to the Royal College of Constantinople. But during the dynastic and religious disorders of the 7th and 8th centuries, the college was destroyed, its library of many thousand volumes was burned, and learning found its sole refuge in the monasteries on Mt. Athos, and in a few of those on the islands of the Archipelago. The 9th century however witnessed a great revival of interest in learning. The Cæsar, Bardos, uncle of the emperor, became its patron, and founded in the capitol "a free university, independent of church and clergy in which distinguished teachers of philosophy, geometry, astronomy, and high grammar, gave lectures which he himself attended." The salaries of the teachers were paid by the state; Leo, archbishop of Thessalonica, a man famous for his knowledge of astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy, was placed at its head; and Photius, reputed the most learned man of the age, was summoned to the capitol as patriarch. A library of the ancient works of Greek literature was carefully collected; and, on account of the intellectual indolence that prevailed, its contents

were imparted in extracts, abridgments, and epitomes.

From this time forth until Constantinople was taken by the Turks in 1453, amidst all the revolutions and changes of dynasties, a certain type of learning, inferior indeed in essential character, had its continuous centre in Constantinople. It was promoted by successive emperors, and its resources were enlarged by additions of books, so that in the 12th century, Constantinople had a rich collection of the ancient Greek literature, in which are named some works, like the comedies of Menander, whose loss is deplored by scholars. Some of the old monasteries also had valuable libraries, and these in much later ages became famous as places where valuable manuscripts have been found after centuries of oblivion. The language of the court and church had something of Attic purity; literary works in the ancient tongue were undertaken by Anna Comnena, daughter of the emperor Alexius, of whom and of the manners of the court, and the Greek pride of race, Sir Walter Scott gives a graphic picture in "Count Robert of Paris"; and a persistent effort was made to re-establish the reign of the ancient Greek science, literature, and philosophy, under Christian auspices.

But the Byzantines showed themselves incapable of making any original and independent use of all their learned resources. The stamp of intellectual barrenness is impressed on all that they did. They could collect, edit, comment, and copy manuscript; could make epitomes; could compile lexicons and manuals of rules; but their attempts at poetic and historic com-

position are valueless, and their efforts at philosophy are a mere "scholastic summary of Aristotle".

Gibbon* attributes their literary and scientific sterility to the bewilderment of their understandings by metaphysical controversies, to which they were fatally prone; to the vitiation of their taste by monkish homilies, which seems to me a more doubtful cause; to a loss of all reliable principles of moral evidence through a belief in present miracles and visions; and to the total lack of emulous rivalry with other polished nations. "Alone in the universe," he says, "the self-satisfied pride of the Greeks was not disturbed by the comparison of foreign merit; and it is no wonder if they fainted in the race, since they had neither competitors to urge their speed, nor judge to crown their victory."

With regard to the first reason that Gibbon assigns, Hallam says:† "The Greeks abused their ingenuity in theological controversies, those especially which related to the nature and incarnation of our Savior, wherein, as is usual, the disputants became more positive and rancorous as their creed receded from the possibility of human apprehension."

It is possible that some one or all of these circumstances may have been influential in producing the undoubted intellectual stagnation of the Byzantines, their poverty of spirit amid great literary riches. But it is well that we should bear in mind that for abundantly more than ten centuries before the age that we are considering, this same poverty of spirit

* History of Decline and Fall of Roman Empire, C 53

† Middle Ages, C. VI

had characterized the degenerate descendants of Socrates and Aristotle, of Homer, Sophocles, and Demosthenes; and this too when their intellects were not yet bewildered with empty controversies, at least about ecclesiastical subjects, nor their judgments clouded by superstitious beliefs, nor their taste vitiated by barbarous homilies; and when a generous emulation with other polished nations was still vividly open to them in Rome and Alexandria, had their national self conceit been ready to accept it.

Hence we must, I think, look for some deeper cause of the fact that we are considering; and it is quite possible that this may be found in the lack, by both the Byzantine Greeks and their predecessors for a long series of generations, of any high ideal of human life and human destiny, like that which the founder of Christianity presented, but which the nations were not yet prepared to receive, because even a Divine revelation requires ages for the experience of mankind to grow up to its apprehension.

The Byzantine people had far greater treasures from antiquity than we have received from them, but they seemed incapable of advancing by their use; and, as Schlegel truly says, in his *History of Literature* (Lecture 7), "The matter of chief importance in all civilization, and in all literature, is not the dead treasures we possess, but the living uses to which we apply them." He further says that amongst the countrymen of Aristotle, "such was the neglect of his writings, which we consider as amongst the most precious monuments of the Grecian intellect, that there remained at one time but a single copy, and that too

rescued from destruction by an accident of the most extraordinary nature.”

It would really seem that the ancient poets and orators, historians and philosophers, artists and scientists, had exhausted the entire cycle of possibilities of the Grecian intellect, on the plane on which it persisted in standing; and had bequeathed to their successors a “barren sceptre”, entailing an inglorious show of empty sovereignty, until it should be transferred to the realm of some new and loftier ideal. Incapable of this transfer, or too indolent to attempt it, there was left to the Byzantines only the humble yet eventually useful office of collecting scattered and rare books and thus rescuing from destruction the precious fragments of ancient science and literature; of attempting to uphold the ancient world unchanged and unenlarged against new peoples and a new spirit; of becoming thereby, during many ages of disorder and barbarism, the sole refuge of the ancient culture; of preserving this always in its ancient form and practically unaltered, as it would inevitably not have been with a race of vigorous originality; and of thus saving the youthful western peoples, whom they despised as barbarians, many weary and devious wanderings to attain a like culture, by presenting to them ultimately the unchanged antique types of which they had before been ignorant. This was indeed a humble office, analogous to that of a sarcophagus in which are entombed dead treasures, yet it performed a service to the future of learning not less great or noteworthy because wholly unintended. How important was this

work of the Byzantine Greeks, and how great their unconscious service to future generations, we shall see more clearly when we come to study the educational history of the 15th and 16th centuries.

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION TO THE AGE OF CHARLEMAGNE

¶ We have seen that amid the gloom and confusion of the Middle Ages there are discernible three currents of intellectual and educational effort; and that these currents, while parallel in time, were for many ages wholly distinct in space, having no reciprocal influence, separated not more by location than by ruling ideas and purposes. All were monotheistic, believing in the same God whom the Hebrews adored; all opposed the prevailing heathenism; two believed in the same Son of God who had come to save the world;—but aside from these facts they had little or nothing in common.

The followers of Mohammed were filled with a fiery zeal which made them missionaries not less than warriors, intent not merely on conquering but on converting the nations with whom they came in contact. This fanatical enthusiasm, which combined earthly dominion with the spread of their faith, was for several ages correlated with an intellectual activity which, as we have seen, made their career the most brilliant and noteworthy fact of any which marked the world of that period. To confirm the faith which they extended by their conquering arms, and to perpetuate the results of their intellectual activity, they early saw the need of a corresponding education, and made the brilliant educational efforts which we have witnessed.

We have seen that the Byzantine education was doubtless a continuation of the ancient Greek culture, greatly attenuated indeed after the schools of Athens were closed by Justinian and during the religious contentions of the succeeding ages, but rising again into prominence from the 9th century. Here then for about six centuries the old Greek learning and literature, with the dogmas of the Eastern Church, were industriously taught; but with an utter lack of originality for which later ages have reason to be grateful, since thereby the finest products of the old Greek intellect have in large measure reached us unchanged.

We come now to the examination of the third of these currents of intellectual life, long inconspicuous while the others were brilliant, yet into which these finally converge, and from which they gain their significance in educational history. And here it becomes essential that we should first observe the nature of the *ideal* which forms the basis of Christian education,—an ideal, towards which through ages of darkness and mistaken effort, it has slowly, deviously, and through many unavoidable errors, been gradually approximating.

In the ancient world, as we have seen, man was valued as a means for magnifying and exalting the state to which he belonged, and chiefly in so far as he was useful for that purpose. With the coming of Christ, however, with the example of his divine manhood, and with his teachings, a new idea was introduced into the world, which was destined to produce far-reaching consequences on both civilization and education. It was the idea of the infinite worth of the

human being as such, since he is destined to an immortality of duration, since God is immanent in him, and since his loftiest work is to become perfect, as his Father in heaven is perfect.

In its truest expression, therefore, Christianity views all men as equal in valuation before God, and their destiny as of equal moment to Him. Before him mere human rank and station are nothing. The like destination of all men as His children demands therefore equal rights, equal duties, and, as far as possible, equal opportunities for education, for all men, and gives to all mankind a claim on the proper brotherly offices of their fellows.

It is a confused recognition of this fundamental truth in our own times, a truth which in early ages the ancient Hebrews alone saw, and yet saw not clearly, which inspires the various humanitarian movements and the newly awakened consciousness of the mutual duties of capital and labor, the duties of the rich to the very poor, and of the learned to the ignorant, with which our age is rife. This idea, opposed by materialism and selfishness, and so obscured by them that Christianity has often seemed little better than mere worldliness, has been slowly leavening the world and its educational agencies, and in these latter days is moving more swiftly towards its realization.

Christ himself, in honoring marriage by his coöperation, in the love that he manifests for children, in the emphasis that he lays on character as of more worth than riches or worldly success, and in showing that the chief aim of man's existence is the elevation of himself out of the earthly into the spiritual through

righteousness and truth,—as well as by his models of how teaching should be done and the spirit in which it must be done to attain the highest success, has both laid the foundations of modern pedagogy and revealed to us its ideal.

This ideal, may be thus briefly expressed. Its aim is universal and purely humanitarian. It has no sectional limits, no merely utilitarian implications. “It is to minister to the welfare of society and the state by caring for the welfare of the individual man; to push the divine and human in man’s nature to its fullest possible development, that he may become intellectually and morally *free* and so like his Maker; and to use thereto all science and art, the world and life, as means of culture, by mastering which man may also become a benevolent and creative intelligence in his limited sphere, as God is in his infinite one.”

This idea which makes the individual and not the state the chief centre of interest, and which aims to prepare man for eternal happiness hereafter by bringing into vigorous activity during his earthly career all that is best in him, as thinker and worker, and as sharer in all the multiform relations of social life,—was so unlike anything in the ancient world, that it is not surprising that it required ages of blind groping before its fulness of meaning became apparent to mankind. Here as elsewhere, even a divine revelation has needed the interpretation of a long-continued human experience to make its meaning clear.

The earliest Christians seem indeed, at least in some recorded cases, to have maintained with each other fraternal relations, having all things in common, and

the rich ministering of their abundance to their poorer brethren. The sphere of woman was in the family, but there she was the co-equal of man, the chief teacher of the young, and their guide in the formation of character. Children were looked upon as a precious gift of God, who were to be trained for His service and for that of their fellow men. The earliest Christian education was therefore domestic in character, and in this the child was trained to a keen sense of duty through the inculcation of Christian ideas by precepts and more effectually by the example of parents and friends.

So far then the early practice conformed fairly though unconsciously to its ideal. But this unconscious conformity did not long continue. With many, the dominion of old ideas was too strong to be at once overcome; while with the more zealous and spiritual-minded, exclusive contemplation of the future life presently led to a neglect of this world and its duties, that by ascetic observances they might prepare themselves for the unseen world. Hence in the East pious men became at first hermits, and later were led by the strong social instinct to form societies for an exclusively religious life. This practice soon spread to the West, and in both East and West monasteries arose. This fact was fraught with the most important consequences to the future of learning, for which, during the ages of violence and disorder, the monasteries became the only safe retreat.

The old Roman utilitarian spirit also did not disappear with the subversion of the empire. It survived in a new form, and as the Christian church gathered

strength by its accessions this spirit reappeared in its dogmas, its methods, and the purposes for which it used literature.* Amidst the violence and the conflicts which were rife, the church was forced to rely on its dominion over the minds and consciences of men. Hence it was not strange that it should foster even superstitions that aided it in this purpose, and that it should in all ways claim, and exercise so far as practicable, a limitless control over thoughts, thus suppressing freedom of thinking, self-centred individuality, and self-judging responsibility.

With the introduction into the world's history of this new humanitarian idea, an idea which cares best for society and the state, for this present world and for the unseen world, by caring primarily for the complete development of the individual, mankind has completed its cycle of experience of the ideas that can influence education, and has reached the last and highest, which it is now its duty to strive fully to realize.

Let us now trace the history of its progress among the nations of Western Europe; let us note the expedients that were adopted during ages of change and confusion to keep alive some feeble sparks of learning, at least among the clergy, and the vicissitudes to which these efforts were subjected; let us also, while noticing the deviations of education from its high ideal under the pressure of invincible necessity, observe besides how an influence from Saracenic culture came to co-operate with other influences arising from the circumstances of the times in giving

* Guizot. *Civilization in France*, Lecture 16th, p. 102.

origin, impulse, and direction to the early universities; and how, a few centuries later, when the universities were struggling under the yoke of a narrow and narrowing dialectic, a fresh impulse springing from the effete East, which, while itself preserving a form without spirit, had yet been the conservator of the old Greek culture, came to infuse a new spirit into the vigorous but now lethargic West and to turn it ultimately to the pursuit of its long-misunderstood and neglected ideal.

The first Christian efforts for education, apart from the domestic training which has already been alluded to, was the establishment of the Catechumenate, the object of which was to teach adult proselytes before baptism to read the Bible and to understand and accept the fundamental Christian doctrines. These schools were taught by the pastors, and were divided, it is said, into first two and later four stages of advancement. Their purposes were limited to imparting a knowledge of distinctively Christian truths, the purely literary education of the few who desired it being still gained from the heathen civil schools. The special training of those who desired to become Christian teachers was gained by intimacy with the pastors and by imitation of their example, the civil schools being here also relied upon at first for imparting the knowledge that was needful for their sacred vocation.

The first attempt to connect religious with literary and scientific teaching was made by Pantanus in Alexandria, 181 A. D., in a school which from its procedure by question and answer was called the Catechetical school. It was founded as a school for the systematic

interpretation of Scripture, together with instruction in grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, and geometry. Presumably it was intended to make attendance at heathen schools unnecessary.

Pantanus was succeeded in this school by Clemens of Alexandria, who believed that the heathen philosophers were, like Moses, in some degree divinely inspired, and that philosophy, like the Mosaic writings, was a preparation for the more complete revelation which was made by Christ and which is the fulfilment of philosophy as well as of the law. Hence he taught his pupils what was good in philosophy as well as in the Scriptures, and aimed thus gradually to lead them up to Christianity,—a procedure which seems to have been judicious with those who, while well-disposed towards the new faith, still had a hereditary respect for the works of the great heathen sages.

Clemens was succeeded by the wise and learned Origen, under whom this school attained its greatest and most brilliant reputation. Origen connected the study of nature with dialectics, so as to lead his disciples from nature up to God, a noteworthy effort in that age. He also taught geometry and astronomy as a preparative to ethics. Then followed the reading and interpretation of the poets and philosophers, in which he encouraged his pupils to full freedom of investigation, whilst he accompanied their efforts with sympathy and guidance. Finally he brought them with this full preparation to the knowledge and interpretation of scripture, and in this he made use of the idea of an allegoric or mystic meaning in the explanation of passages which seemed to him to convey

notions unworthy of the Deity—a mode of interpretation which prevailed largely in the Middle Ages.

This account, summarized from Karl Schmidt, will give an idea of the subjects and methods of this school during the time of its greatest prosperity in the 3d century. Origen was succeeded by other teachers of some repute, but the school sank into insignificance after the middle of the 4th century.

Thus far we see no openly expressed opposition to heathen science and literature nor to the sending of Christian youth to heathen schools. But in the 3d century a note of opposition to the civil schools began to be heard, beginning with Tertullian and expressing itself prominently in the Apostolic Constitutions, about 300 A. D., and later in the writings of Chrysostom.

The Constitutions say: “Refrain from all the writings of the heathen; for what hast thou to do with strange discourses, laws, or false prophets, which in truth turn aside from the faith those who are weak in understanding.” And then, directing attention to the Scriptures as containing what the faithful may need of poetry and prophecy, they conclude: “Wherefore abstain scrupulously from all strange and *devilish* books.”*

While the teachings of Chrysostom contain much good sense, as for example the declaration that women are the best teachers for children, they still insist that the cloister is the best and safest place for Christian education, because youth are there isolated from the corruptions of the world, and gain an inexpugnable

* Mullinger. Schools of Charles the Great, p. 8.

habit of virtue. Chrysostom therefore dissuades from attendance at heathen schools, where he says "boys learn vices rather than sciences, and in grasping after lesser goods lose the greatest. * * * If the soul is virtuous the ignorance of science will not hurt it, but if it is corrupted it suffers harm in spite of the most eloquent tongue."

The veto of the Fathers on the civil schools has its justification in the fact that during the last four centuries of their existence they paid almost exclusive attention to the mere ornaments of heathen culture.

During the 3d and 4th centuries a vigorous opposition began to be manifested, not only to the heathen schools, but also to all heathen literature, the best and indeed the only literature then accessible, save the Scriptures, that was worthy to be called literature. Early in the 3d century this opposition was led by the fiery and uncompromising Tertullian, who was followed by his disciple, Cyprian, the learned and pious bishop of Carthage, and he by St. Jerome and St. Augustine, all counted among the fathers of the Christian church.

Nor, when we consider the circumstances and the times, does this opposition seem to have been prompted by an unwarrantable prejudice. For the world was but slowly emerging from the shades of heathenism, and all the surroundings still bore the heathen stamp; yet the literature that the church fathers proscribed presents the heathen ideas and mythology in their most alluring guise. It was not unreasonable therefore to fear the influence of such literature on impressionable youth, who must besides be brought into daily



A MEDIEVAL SCHOOL (From Cubberley's Syllabus after a title page of Anwykyl's Compendium Grammaticae)

contact with heathenism, unless secluded in cloisters.

But in those ages, besides this not unfounded fear, the heathen were meeting the Christian doctrine of miracles with rival pretensions to supernatural powers and to gifts of prophecy which, with the easy credulity of superstitious ages, the Christians accepted as true and attributed to sorcery and to the baleful aid of an omnipresent devil, thus adding horror to their distrust of the heathen and all his works.

It is needful also to bear in mind the idea of the sole end of man then strongly entertained by the entire Christian church. As antiquity had regarded man only as a citizen of this world, so the church looked on him only as a pilgrim to the unseen world, a view quite as one-sided though incomparably more worthy and elevated. Of what value then to such a pilgrim this vain world with the allurements of its literary graces, especially when such literature bore for the Christian the fatal stamp of heathen ideas!

Unfortunately for the culture of the Middle Ages, this idea gained the mastery; the study of ancient literature and science mostly ceased; and thus, as Guizot remarks, the Christian world of Western Europe deliberately cut itself loose from the past in which it had its roots. It was left to much more modern times to regard man more justly as a citizen of both worlds, so using this present time with all that is best in its accumulated stores as to become a more completely developed inheritor of the future world.

Let it not be thought, however, that all the fathers of the church in the 3d and 4th centuries took this

narrow view of ancient literature. St. Basil (330-379), justly surnamed the Great, was more liberal and judicious. Like Plato he advised in the education of the young the discriminating use of the ancient poets, and especially Homer. He even thought that such a study would be a useful preparative for the deeper study of the scriptures; and he adduces in support of this opinion the examples of Moses and Daniel, trained, the one in all the learning of the Egyptians, and the other in the deepest mysteries of the Chaldean lore, before occupying themselves with the religious contemplation whereby they became the law-giver and the prophet of their people.

We may here call attention to the beginnings in these centuries of a distinctive church music, which originated in the regulation by St. Ambrose of the tones and measures which were best adapted to the solemn services of the church. Hence the church issued from its early experiences supplied with its two earliest and too often exclusively used means for youthful education, viz., religious doctrines and church song.

To these was added, when all the branches of the western church had come to look to Rome as their common centre and national head, the only language which in the Middle Ages could lay any claim to universality, the Latin. This became not only the general vehicle for ideas to the learned among many widely scattered peoples, but also a kind of universal symbol of a common faith, a sign of Christian unity, indeed in some sort a sacred language, in which all who would officiate in the services of the church and

all who would aspire to influence in the gravest affairs, must be duly instructed.

Here then we have outlined the staple of instruction during a large part of the Middle Ages, and here the consecrated medium through which instruction was imparted.

During the Middle Ages certain works had great celebrity as text-books, or, more properly speaking, as authorities, insomuch that they are of frequent mention in literary history, and hence they become important factors in the educational history of the period. Both they and their authors had an importance and extent of influence that no text-book or its author has attained during the past five centuries. A few of these works deserve a brief mention here, in addition to the far earlier books described in my *History of Ancient Education* (chapter xviii, pp. 262-272).

Martianus Capella, who is supposed to have died about 500 A. D., prepared a work in nine books on the liberal arts, in which verse is somewhat liberally interspersed. The arts are fancifully treated, since the first two books present science in general under the guise of a marriage of Mercury with Philology, merchandise with letters, utility with culture, at which the seven bridesmaids treat in turn of the seven liberal arts of the Middle Ages constituting the Trivium and Quadrivium. Extensive as its subject is, it is by no means a large book. The elementary treatment of any one of the arts that it touches would, at present, make quite as large a book.

About the beginning of the 6th century treatise another on the seven liberal arts was written by Magnus

Aurelius Cassiodorus, a Roman of high rank who later became a monk. Schmidt says this treatise had great ecclesiastical favor as a school book, on account of the piety of its author, as well as because of its brevity.

At nearly the same period as these two authors, Boethius, a man of noble Roman family, wrote in prison a work entitled "The Consolation of Philosophy", in which also poetry is plentifully used. For many centuries this work was widely read in schools, and held well-nigh the place of a supplement to the Bible. Later it was translated into many languages, an English translation accompanied by a life of Boethius being published in 1695 by Richard, Lord Preston. Besides this work he composed also treatises on arithmetic, geometry, and music which were much used in schools, and were fuller and more satisfactory than those of Capella.

Isidore, archbishop of Seville, (+ 636 A. D.) wrote a work in twenty books, which treats not only of the seven liberal arts but also of all other branches of knowledge then known to men, constituting a veritable encyclopædia of the knowledge of the 7th century. This is probably the earliest encyclopaedia ever written, and is highly interesting as showing the range of subjects thought important in the 7th century. Beginning with the liberal arts, it ranges through ships and their equipment to household furniture, food, and even various kinds of drinking vessels.

But of all the men who composed works used in the schools of the Middle Ages, none is more worthy of consideration by Englishmen or their descendants than Baeda, commonly known as the Venerable Bede. His

long and studious life, extending from 673 to 755 A. D., was passed chiefly in the monastery of Jarrow. Here he gradually mastered all the learning of his time, being skilled in Greek as well as Latin, a rare thing in his day. He, as well as Isadore, composed an encyclopaedic work for the use of his pupils, for he was all his life a teacher. He wrote also a long-esteemed History of the English Church. His last labor was a translation of the Gospel of St. John into his native Anglo-Saxon tongue, and his choice of this gospel was wholly in harmony with his own gentle and spiritual character. The brief but affecting account of the life and death of this great English scholar and teacher in Green's "Short History of the English People" will be read with interest by all who are attracted to educational history.*

Contemporaneous with Charlemagne and a pupil of Alcuin, was Rabanus Maurus, the head of the famous cloister-school of Fulda which still exists as a gymnasium, who was later prince archbishop of Mainz, and who is known by the proud title "Primus praeceptor Germaniæ." He too, besides other works used as school-books, wrote for the use of his pupils an encyclopaedic work on all the sciences then known. It was evidently modelled on the earlier work of Isidore, draws from the same sources, treats much the same topics in its twenty-two books in nearly the same order, and shows the same lack of any effort at extending the boundaries of knowledge.

The last of the famous mediæval school-books that shall be named is the *Doctrinale* of Alex. Dolensis,

*OP. cit. C. 1. Section 4th.

which was the great text-book of grammar from the 13th to the 16th century, and was doubtless the dread of all school boys who conned its crabbed pages.*

Such then were the chief text-books on which was based most of the instruction given during the Middle Ages. Let us now see what provisions for school instruction existed during the first centuries of this period. From 500 to 1100 A. D. these were wholly of two kinds, viz. Monastic schools belonging to the monasteries and taught by the monks, and Cathedral schools established at the seats of bishops and carried on under their supervision.

The monastic schools, which chiefly afforded education to others than monks, owe their origin to St. Benedict (+ 543 A. D.), who founded an order of monks that take their name from him. His object was the combination of religious contemplation with labor; labor in agriculture and other employments adapted to the secluded life of monks; labor in transcribing and multiplying manuscripts and in the study of the Scriptures; labor also, which chiefly interests us here, in the instruction of the young. This instruction was primarily intended for those who expected to devote themselves to the service of the church, but ultimately instruction was sought for from the monks by those who had no such intention. Hence grew up in the course of time a separation of their pupils into *interns* and *externs*, or those taught within the cloisters

* For further information on these old school-books, persons who do not care to go to the works themselves, which may be found in any considerable library, should consult Laurie's *Rise and Const. of Univ's*, C. IV; Schmidt, *Gesch der Pädagogik*, Vol. II, pp 165-169, and Specht *Gesch. des Unterrichtswesen in Deutschland*, C. IV.

for the religious life, and those taught without for more secular purposes.

These Benedictine communities multiplied rapidly over Europe, and extended the blessing of elementary and sometimes of more advanced instruction to not a few who contemplated secular vocations. Laurie says: "It is to the monks of this rapidly-extending order, or to the influence which their rule exercised on other conventual orders, that we owe the diffusion of schools in the earlier half of the Middle Ages, and the preservation of ancient learning. The Benedictine monks not only taught in their own monasteries, but were everywhere in demand as heads of episcopal or cathedral schools."*

The subjects taught in these schools were first of all reading, writing, and singing in accordance with the system of St. Ambrose. To these were added enough arithmetic to calculate the return of the church festivals, occasionally some reading of classic authors for merely grammatical purposes, and in some cases an exceedingly elementary study of the Trivial and Quadrivial branches. The greatest extent of any of these branches may be seen by consulting the encyclopaedias of Isidore or Rabanus Maurus.

Episcopal or cathedral schools of some kind doubtless arose at a quite early period to subserve the absolute necessities of the bishops in providing clergy, readers, and choristers for the extension and even for the bare continuance of their work. Indeed we might consider the Catechetical school of Alexandria as the prototype of these schools. Their studies, aside from

* Laurie—Rise and Constitution of Universities, Lecture 2d.

the natural religious training, embraced branches of the Trivium and Quadrivium; but we have no reason to suppose that the instruction was other than of the most meagre and elementary character, presenting only such topics as were of the most obvious and pressing necessity, and with little or no attention to the multiplication of manuscripts. It hardly need be said that the instruction in these schools as well as in the monasteries was given wholly in Latin.

In the generation immediately preceding the activity of Charlemagne, or about 750 A. D., Bishop Chrodegang of Metz made a vigorous effort to improve the Episcopal schools by setting an example of their better organization, and his exertions seem to have produced some little effect; but any considerable change for the better, both in these and in the monastic establishments, awaited the strong hand of the wise and energetic Charlemagne.

The condition of learning previous to 790 A. D. may be briefly summed up in this way. Learning pertained chiefly to the clergy and was by no means universal even among them. The peasantry as a class were taught only the dogmas of the church, though, in accordance with the democratic spirit that, to its honor, has always animated the Roman Catholic church, boys of ambition and promise from any class could gain ready admission to whatever opportunities for learning were available, and a capitulary of Charlemagne gives reason to believe that boys of humble birth formed the majority of the pupils. Nobles and princes, at the best, learned only the elements of knowledge, together with church doctrines and sing-

ing, to which was added in the case of princes some elementary knowledge of whatever laws then existed. The ability to read and write was more common among noble girls than among their brothers, but for the best educated girls who were taught in the cloisters, the chief subjects were church observances, domestic duties, and embroidery; and it is doubtful whether the small modicum of learning here enumerated existed to any considerable extent in the wide Frankish dominions until near the time of Charlemagne.*

Even the consecrated language, the Latin, had degenerated and become barbarized. What better could be looked for when even so enlightened a prelate as Gregory the Great thought it shameful that the language of the Holy Spirit should be subjected to the petty restraints of grammar? †

In the times of which we are speaking Ireland and England were confessedly the brightest abodes of Christian learning. The suspicion of dislike of heathen literature and science had not affected them seriously, and hence both Greek and Latin literature—the Greek more especially in Ireland—were cultivated in their monasteries with a zeal and success not exhibited elsewhere. The Venerable Bede was doubtless far above an average specimen of monkish learning in the early part of the 8th century, even in these favored islands, as yet comparatively little troubled by devastating wars; yet there can be no doubt that in the

* Mullinger-Schools of Charlemagne, p. 68. Specht, *Gesch. des Unterrichtswesens*, etc. 1st chapter expresses a different opinion.

† Schmidt, *Geschichte der Pädagogik*. Vol. 2, p. 188, and Hallam, *Middle Ages*, C. IX part 1st.

schools of Ireland and England, and especially in those of Jarrow and York, there was a relatively high grade of scientific attainment.

Thus Alcuin is quoted by Guizot † as saying of that of York in his day, about 760 A. D., "The learned Ælbert gave drink to thirsty minds at the sources of various studies and sciences. To some he was eager to communicate the art and rules of Grammar; for others he caused the waves of Rhetoric to flow. He exercised these in the combats of jurisprudence and those in the songs of Adonia. Some learned from him to sound the pipes of Castalia, and to strike with lyric foot the summits of Parnassus. To others he taught the harmony of the heavens, the works of the sun and moon, the five zones of the pole, the seven wandering stars, the laws of the course of the stars, their appearance and decline, the motions of sea, the tremblings of the earth, the nature of men, of beasts and birds, and the inhabitants of woods; he unveiled the various qualities and the combinations of numbers; he taught how to calculate with certainty the solemn return of Easter; and, above all he explained the mysteries of the Holy Scriptures."

From this description, whose evident inflation of style is due to the fact that it is a cold prose rendering of what was poetry in the original, we learn that in York there was, for that period, a generous course of study, including not only most of the seven liberal arts, but also jurisprudence, natural history, and the exposition of the Scriptures.

It happened from this better state of learning in

† History of Civilization in France, Lecture 22.

these islands that not a few scholars were summoned thence to promote learning in the continent, amongst whom was Alcuin himself, as we shall presently see, and, at a later day, John Scotus Erigena, whose name indicates his Irish origin. This brighter condition of learning, however, was doomed to a rude interruption, early in the 9th century, from the Danish invasions, which wrought such havoc in the places of study that in 871, when Alfred the Great came to the throne, he testifies that he could not “remember one south of Thames who could explain his service book in English”; whilst in the northern part of England “the Danish sword had left few survivors of the school of Ecgberht or Baeda.”*

* Green, Short History of the English People Sec V

CHAPTER III

THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN THE NINTH CENTURY

When the state of learning in England and Western Europe was such as has been described in the preceding chapter, two monarchs arose who, in the last part of the 8th century and in the 9th, made vigorous and to a considerable degree successful efforts for the increase and reform of schools and for the revival of the literary spirit. These were Charlemagne in Western Europe, † 814, and the English Alfred, † 901.

Charlemagne, distinguished as a conqueror whose dominions extended over much of Europe, was also wise enough to desire that his monarchy should be characterized not less by its enlightenment than by its extent. To promote the culture which he desired, he made use of the clergy as the only learned class; but he was sagacious enough to look far beyond the then narrow limits of ecclesiastical learning, and to grasp all the best elements of progress then available among all the nations that he ruled. As a faithful son of the church he desired a learned clergy; but as a wise ruler he evidently regarded such a clergy as instruments for the elevation, through education, of the masses of his subjects, rather than as mere guardians of ecclesiastical lore.

We shall most easily gain a clear view of Charlemagne's efforts for the advancement of learning by

considering separately the four most characteristic phases of these efforts:

(1) his improvement of the instrumentalities through which he must work,

(2) his measures for the founding or reformation of schools,

(3) his encouragement of the use of the various vernaculars that prevailed among his subjects, as a means for bringing learning within their reach,

(4) the learned men, especially Alcuin, whom he invited to supervise or further his designs.

(1) The instruments on whom he must depend to further any efforts that he might make for the improvement of education, were obviously the monks and clergy, for they were *ex officio* the representatives and conservators of whatever learning existed within his realm. But the intellectual and moral condition of this class was at that time not encouraging.* His first care must therefore obviously be given to making them what they should be in life and conduct, and to secure in them a respectable grade of learning, as well scientific as ecclesiastical. He therefore issued to the superior clergy edicts for the improvement of those under their supervision, of which a good example is his circular letter of 787 A. D. to Bangulf, Abbot of Fulda.

Guizot in his 22d lecture on the History of Civilization in France gives with some omissions a translation of this imperial circular which I copy here, adding an omitted sentence which is suited to our purpose from another version.†

* See Mullinger, *The Schools of Charlemagne*, p. 37 et seq.

† A translation of the entire capitulary may be found in Mullinger, *Op. Cit.* p. 98.

“ Charles by the grace of God, etc., to Bangulf, Abbot, and his brotherhood, health: We beg to inform your Devotion to God that, in concert with our counsellors, we have deemed it beneficial that in the bishoprics and monasteries confided to our government by favor of Christ, care should be taken, not only to live orderly and according to our holy religion, but moreover to instruct in the knowledge of letters, and according to the capacity of individuals, all such as are willing and able to learn by God’s help. For though of the two it is better to be good than to be learned, yet to have knowledge leads to being good.

“ In the various letters addressed to us from monasteries, announcing that the brethren continued to pray for us in their holy ceremonies, and in their private orisons, we have remarked that for the most part, while the sentiments were excellent the language in which they were conveyed was generally rude and illiterate. * * * This inspired us with an apprehension that the same want of ability which prevented men from writing properly must also operate in keeping them from a due understanding of the holy Scriptures. It is certain, at all events, that the allegories, emblems, and imagery of the holy writings, will be more readily comprehended in their true spiritual meaning by those who are versed in general learning.

“ We therefore would have you select from among your brethren such as may be best fitted, for first acquiring themselves and then communicating to others a knowledge of letters; and let such proceed to their task with the least possible delay. As you value our favor fail not to communicate copies of this communication to



CHARLEMAGNE, 742-814

all the suffragan bishops and all the monasteries around you; and let no monk go beyond his monastery to administer justice, or to enter the assemblies and the voting places. Adieu."

This imperial circular shows the earnest desire of Charlemagne that his clergy should be brought back to purity of morals and regularity of life, although he cautiously refrains from directly charging them with any delinquencies; that they should strive after a decent standard of scholarship, sagaciously basing his anxiety on this account on a motive likely to be influential with the clerical mind, that they might be the better able to understand the Scriptures; and that they should select and establish those skilful to teach. The final sentence conveys a warning against meddling with political and judicial affairs, to which we may infer from this that the monks and clergy had become addicted, to the neglect of their own proper duties. Noteworthy also is the emphasis with which he demands that his wishes in all these respects should be strictly observed.

Evidences are not wanting that this circular of Charlemagne had its desired effect. One of the most interesting of these is an autobiographic account by Walafried Strabo, of the teachers, subjects, and methods of study in the monastery of Reichenau on Lake Constance, from the year 815 to 825 A. D., during which time he was a pupil there.* This account by one of the pupils from his own standpoint, testifies to a condition of studies and to an ability and zeal on the

* This account may be found in full in Schmidt, *Geschichte der Pädagogik*, vol. 2d pp. 197-212

part of teachers at this monastery which is highly creditable. That it was no isolated instance is shown by the fact that Strabo went later to advance his learning at Fulda, then under the charge of Rabanus Maurus, "Primus praeceptor Germaniæ", and returned thence to Reichenau as teacher and ultimately as abbot. This two-fold fact is a striking indication of the effectiveness of Charlemagne's efforts.

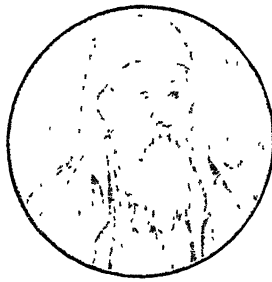
It is worthy of note that Charlemagne by his own example added weight to his commands; for he was a zealous student himself, had a school of the palace for himself and those who surrounded him which followed him wherever he went, and is even said to have learned to write after he came to the throne, though the testimony of his friend Eginhard shows that he never succeeded in writing well. What courtier, what ecclesiastic could fail to put new vigor into his efforts for learning, when he saw his sovereign, busy with wars and perplexed by the affairs of a vast empire, using whatever spare moments he could steal from the duties of his station, in the improvement of his learning!

(2) Having cared for the improvement of those who should be teachers of the young, the emperor turned his attention to the increase of schools, requiring that "in every episcopal see and every monastery, there should be a school for instruction in the Psalms, singing, notation, counting, and the Latin tongue, and that the pupils should be supplied with accurately transcribed text-books."* One of the most energetic of his prelates, Theodulf, Bishop of Orleans, even

* See also Mullinger, *Schools of Charles the Great*, for a capitulary of 789 A. D. to the same effect. P. 100.



ALFRED THE GREAT, 849-901



ORIGEN ADAMANTIUS 185[?]-253[?]
See page 46



HIPPOCRATES 430-375 B C
See page 27



GALEN 130-200
See page 27



EUCLID, 300 — B C
See page 27



ARISTOTLE 384-322 B C
See page 142

ordered his clergy to establish schools in all the villages and towns, where elementary instruction should be gratuitously given to all willing youth.

It is also believed by some that Charlemagne had in view the general education of the masses of his people in the elements of learning, and that such education should be enforced by penalties for neglect. This idea seems incredible to the point of absurdity, when we consider the unsettled character of the age, the lack of teachers, the scarcity and cost of books and writing materials, and the task which it would have involved of teaching a strange language to the masses of the people. Yet it evinces the impression produced by the zeal of the emperor for promoting learning.

He not only cared for founding schools, but in some cases made personal examination of the progress of the pupils. A story that is told of him illustrates this. It is to the effect that having established a school in which boys of the noble class and others even of the lowest rank were taught together, on his return from one of his journeys, he caused their written exercises to be submitted to him; and then placing the idle sons of nobles on his left hand, and the poor but industrious lads on his right, he thus addressed the noble culprits: "Ye sons of nobles, ye pretty fellows, who think yourselves so high-born that ye have no need to learn, ye lazy graceless scamps, I tell you that your high-birth and your pretty faces shall avail you nothing. If you do not change your course and improve yourselves, ye shall become grooms and not counts and marshals as your fathers are." This energetic kind of school inspection by the sovereign himself, even if

of no frequent occurrence, was likely to be more than usually influential.

(3) It may readily be supposed that a sovereign so sagacious as Charlemagne would not fail to observe how serious an obstacle to his efforts for the spread of learning and for the growth of his people in the apprehension of religious truth, was presented by the fact that all school instruction and all church services were couched in a language unknown to the people. For more than two centuries before his time, the Latin, current in large portions of his dominions, had been undergoing a progressive change from its original purity, and the germs of several modern tongues were rapidly taking form in popular use. His Germanic subjects had a language of their own which underwent less change.

Hence he set himself vigorously to encourage the cultivation of the German vernacular, and to bring religious truths home to the minds of the people by their presentation in the mother tongue. He is said himself to have essayed the preparation of a German grammar, doubtless by other hands more skilled with the pen than his, and to have made a collection of the old German heroic songs which were current among the people.* From the year preceding his death, the clergy of the west who were under the government of Charlemagne made a considerable use of the vernacular tongues in preaching, and in instruction in the essentials of the Catholic faith, Fulda and St. Gall seeming to have been special centres of influence for the

* Schmidt, *Gesch. der Pädagogik*. Vol. 2d pp. 216 and 217 quotes authorities for this. See also J. Freundgen's account of Rabanus Maurus, p. 26, prefixed to a collection of his pedagogic writings.

use of the German. Under Charles the Bald, grandson of Charlemagne, the French language is said to have been used to some extent as a literary language, as well as in the speech of the people. This is an evidence of the continuing influence of the efforts of Charlemagne in this interesting direction.

(4) Having now discussed Charlemagne's efforts for the promotion of education in his dominions, under the three points of view, the better training of the monks and clergy who were the instruments that he must use in his reforms; the spread of schools throughout his empire and the revival of those that already existed, at least in name; and his encouragement of the use in instruction and in worship of the vernacular tongues that had sprung up in his wide dominions, with his special efforts for the German which was his own native speech, we have to consider finally the men whom he summoned to his aid from a distance, and what they did for the advancement of learning.

Like all great rulers, Charlemagne knew how to distinguish, encourage, and reward men of uncommon merit; and, by this means, while furthering his own ends by their service, he also adorned his reign by the fruits of their genius. Thus, to confine ourselves solely to that which concerns learning, he first discerned the merit of Leidrade, though dwelling on the confines of his empire, and after testing him as librarian and royal messenger, he elevated him to the archbishopric of Lyons, where he greatly aided the educational views of his sovereign.

Thus he summoned from Italy Theodulf, an Italian Goth, and made him bishop of Orleans, where he dis-

tinguished himself by that zeal for the extension of schools that has already been mentioned.

Thus he brought up at his court the promising youth, Eginhard, raised him from post to post till he became his trusted councillor and, as vague tradition says, also his son-in-law; and by this means he unwittingly trained up him who should afterwards transmit to posterity his name and deeds in the best literary work which that age produced.

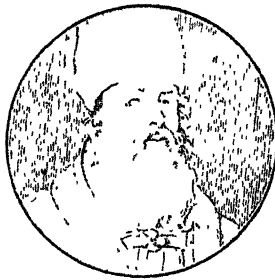
Thus when two young Irish scholars had astonished the crowds in the market place of Aix-la-Chapelle by crying, " Whosoever wants knowledge let him come to us and get it, for we have it for sale," and when some, thinking that they must be madmen to be thus hawking so strange a commodity, brought to the palace the news of their curious conduct, the emperor at once sent for them, and finding that they were really learned men who asked no other price for their scientific wares than " a place to teach them in, pupils to learn them, and needful food and raiment ", attached one of them to his own School of the Palace and sent the other to Italy as the head of a school in Pavia.

But most notably of all he displayed his sagacity by enticing from the famous school of York its most distinguished ornament, Alcuin, to be his trusted adviser and minister in all that concerned the advancement of learning.

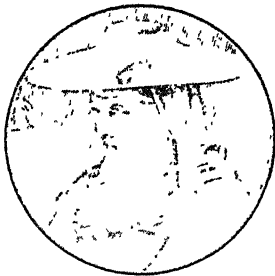
This eminent man, who was reputed to be the most learned scholar of the 8th century, was born at York about 735 A. D., was educated at the famous school of his native city, mastering all the learning then current, and finally on the retirement of his relative and



ST AUGUSTINE, 334-430
See page 48



ST. AMBROSE, 340?-397
See page 52



ST JEROME, 310-420
See page 48



ST BERNARD, 1091-1153



ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI
1182-1226



ST THOMAS AQUINAS, 1225-1274
See page 136

teacher became head of the school. In 781, while on the return from an honorable mission to Rome, at Parma he attracted the attention of Charlemagne, who in the following year invited him to his court to become his adviser in all matters that concerned education.

Whilst in learning Alcuin undoubtedly surpassed all his contemporaries, he does not seem to have been a man of any originality of genius. A devoted adherent of the Roman hierarchy, and implicitly subservient to the authority of the Latin fathers, his ability was displayed chiefly in digesting, classifying, and arranging the stores of the past rather than in striking out any new ideas of his own. This kind of ability eminently fitted him as well for his most weighty service to the future of learning in the revision and correction of faulty manuscripts, as for success in his duties as a teacher. He was besides endowed with a lively imagination, and this he displayed in fanciful and often far-fetched analogies in his teaching, somewhat after the fashion of Origen, the influence of which was apparent much later in the theology of the Mediæval Universities.

In the 22d Lecture of his "History of Civilization in France", Guizot gives an interesting account of the services of this distinguished Englishman while at the court of Charlemagne. He states as the most important of Alcuin's practical contributions to learning, his correction and restoration of the manuscripts of ancient literature, his agency in the revival of public schools and studies, and his own personal work as teacher. I quote from Guizot his account of the revision of manuscripts, omitting only the embodied capitulary of Charlemagne which sets forth the need

of this revision, and recommends its results to all ministers of religion throughout his realm.

“ From the 6th to the 8th century the ancient manuscripts had gone through the hands of copyists so ignorant that the texts had become altogether unrecognizable; infinite passages had been mutilated and misplaced; the leaves were in the utmost disorder; all orthographical and grammatical correctness had disappeared; to read and understand the works thus injured required absolute science, and of science there was less and less every day. To remedy this evil, to restore ancient manuscripts to their proper reading and order, to correct their orthography and their grammar, was one of the first tasks to which Alcuin applied himself; a task which continued to occupy him throughout the remainder of his life, which he constantly recommended to his pupils, and in the fulfilment of which he was supported by Charlemagne’s authority. He concluded it about the year 801, in the abbey of St. Martin de Tours, and sent it to Charlemagne.

“ Such examples and such orders (as those of Charlemagne), could not fail of effect, and the ardor for the reproduction of ancient manuscripts became general; as soon as an exact revision of any work had been completed by Alcuin or one of his disciples, copies of it were transmitted to the principal churches and abbeys, where fresh copies were made for diffusion amongst the lesser churches and abbeys. The art of copying became a source of fortune, of glory even; the monasteries in which the most correct and beautiful copies were executed attained celebrity on this sole account; and in each monastery, the monks who most

excelled in the art were, in like manner, honored among their brethren.—The monastic libraries soon became very considerable in their extent; a *great number of existing manuscripts date from this period*; and though its zeal was more peculiarly directed to sacred literature, profane literature was not altogether neglected.”

It will readily be seen from this account that no more weighty service could have been rendered at that time to the cause of learning which Charlemagne had so much at heart, nor one which had so great promise of permanent benefits. The schools might fall into neglect, as many of them in reality did in the ages succeeding the death of Charlemagne, but the manuscripts were likely to remain as a treasure-house of learning to future studious generations.

In the reestablishment and spread of schools which at this time had fallen everywhere into decay, even in those few places where they had earlier existed, the agency of Alcuin was so intimately connected with the efforts of the sovereign whose minister he was, that it has already been described in previous paragraphs, and needs little farther notice. There can be little doubt that the capitularies respecting education owed their literary form to the skilful pen of Alcuin; but his lack of originality and of independent initiative that has before been mentioned, make it reasonable to suppose that the main ideas to be conveyed and the measures to be adopted originated with the emperor rather than with his minister.

Alcuin's services as a teacher were probably limited at first to “the School of the Palace, which accompanied Charlemagne wherever he went, and at which

were regularly present all those who were with the emperor". Later however his labors as a teacher were not confined within this narrow compass; for Guizot says of him that most of the men who did honor to the great monastic schools, like those of Fulda, Reichenau, and Fontenelle, which now sprang into celebrity, "had been disciples of Alcuin himself, who, amid all his avocations, was a public preacher and a public teacher of great distinction." This was especially true of his last years, after he had retired from court and assumed the duties of Abbot at St. Martin de Tours.

Of the form and method of Alcuin's instruction we have some information in his text-books for grammar, rhetoric, etc., which still exist, and in a specimen lesson which Guizot gives nearly entire in the 22d lecture of his History of Civilization in France. In these his instruction has the dialogue or catechetic form, and is strongly marked by that tendency to a fanciful and allegoric mode of exposition to which attention has been before directed. Alcuin's dialogue method of teaching grammar, and the entire meagre, authoritative, and often fanciful instruction of the Palace School, its marked lack of originality, and the meagre second-hand knowledge of Greek displayed by him, are sketched in lively colors by Mullinger in his history of the Schools of Charlemagne, pp. 75-89.

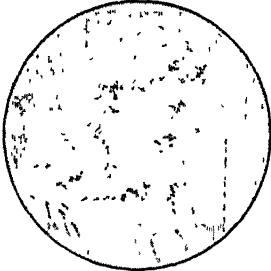
Yet some persons looking only on the surface of things have been inclined to liken the method of Alcuin to that of Socrates, and to claim for him something of the merit of Socrates. How superficial was the resemblance of the two methods, extending only



SOCRATES, 470-399 B C
See page 80



BEDE, 673-735
See page 54



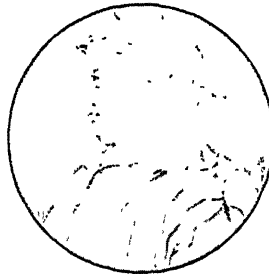
PETER ABELARD, 1079-1142
See page 120



ROGER BACON, 1214-1294
See page 133



LEONARDA OF PISA, .



FRANCESCO PETRARCA, 1304-1374
See page 160

to their catechetical form, will be readily apparent from one of these so-called Socratic lessons given by Guizot.

The interlocutors are Pepin, a son of Charlemagne, and Alcuin, the former of whom asks questions and the latter answers.

P.—What is writing ?

A.—The keeper of history.

P.—What is speaking ?

A.—The interpreter of the soul.

P.—What is it gives birth to speaking ?

A.—The tongue.

P.—What is the tongue ?

A.—The whip of the air.

P.—What is the air ?

A.—The preserver of life.

P.—What is life ?

A.—Happiness for the happy, misery for the miserable, the expectation of death.

P.—What is death ?

A.—An inevitable event, a doubtful journey, a subject of tears for the living, the confirmation of wills, the robber of men.

P.—What is man ?

A.—The slave of death, a passing traveller, a guest in his own abode.

P.—What is winter ?

A.—The exile of spring.

P.—What is spring ?

A.—The painter of the earth.

P.—What is summer ?

A.—The power which clothes the earth and ripens fruits.

P.—What is autumn ?

A.—The granary of the year.

P.—What is the year ?

A.—The chariot of the world, etc.

It is not difficult to see that these fanciful and far-fetched analogies given in answer to the eager questions of a mere school boy, or the other portions of the same dialogue in which Alcuin, becoming questioner, proposes riddles for the prince to guess, bear no resemblance whatever to the searching dialectic method of the Grecian sage, whereby he exposed pretentious error to itself, or pushed some vaguely apprehended truth to its necessary consequences. Indeed, if we are to consider them as anything more serious than a mere pastime, intended as an amusement of a leisure hour, we should doubtless say with Guizot that “as a means of education, these conversations are altogether and strangely puerile,” and that “if the influence of Alcuin had been confined within the walls of this academy, it would have effected little worthy of our notice.”

This can, however, be no fair specimen of his instruction given at the abbey of St. Martin de Tours, where he spent, chiefly in teaching, the closing years of his life. These lessons were addressed to disciples who were more thoroughly trained than the retainers of the court, and who had an object deeper than the qualification of a vague half-barbarian curiosity. Guizot has however given us no specimens of Alcuin's procedure with the distinguished disciples like Rabanus Maurus who went forth from his lessons to shed lustre by their educational efforts on the age in which

they lived. Probably no record of such lessons exists; but it is certain that the specimens we have received have in them nothing of the method or the spirit of Socrates.

In 796 Alcuin assumed his duties as abbot of St. Martin, and the remaining years of his life were spent in the management of the large interests of his monastery, in teaching theology to the group of eager and promising young men who were drawn together by his great reputation, and in an active correspondence, largely on educational matters, with his former pupils and with the emperor.

This seemingly calm period of repose after a useful career, was, however, not free from vexations. He was evidently deeply moved by the favor with which Clement, an Irish scholar, was received at court, apprehending an influence subversive of some of his cherished ideas from the introduction of a type of scholarship in many respects unlike his own. For the Irish scholars of that age were skilled in Greek, in which Alcuin's attainments were very slender; they had a great regard for the Greek fathers and for Martianus Capella, both of whom Alcuin as an adherent of extreme Romish ideas persistently ignored; and they were besides unusually proficient in astronomy, which made them formidable adversaries of the side favored by Alcuin in a vivid controversy waged at that time about the right date of Easter.

The eager and inquiring spirit of the emperor soon showed the effects of novel views, and he distressed his old friend by frequent doubts of the validity of his former teachings, presented in the form of ques-

tions to be solved,—truly a distressful position for an authority hitherto counted omniscient. The death of Alcuin, which occurred in 804 in his 70th year, is attributed by some authors to his grief and mortification at a reproof of Charles on a perhaps injudicious use in a broil of his authority as abbot.

The liability to overestimate the extent and depth of the education given, which is everywhere great during mediæval times, is especially great in the early period that we have been considering; for it is easy to give a considerable list of monasteries and cathedral schools which gained fame, and yet which were dotted over vast spaces of territory and were often separated somewhat widely in time—space and time estimates are apt to lose some of their importance when they relate to remote periods; so too it is easy to make a respectable enumeration of studies pursued, some here and some occasionally there, and from data of this vague character, without a rigid scrutiny as to how much knowledge was really implied under some large sounding title, it is easy to infer that the benefits of education were more widely available and more generally enjoyed than they really were. Yet from what has been said in the preceding pages we may, I think, safely concede that the movement initiated by Charlemagne and inspired by his efforts deserved the lofty title of the First Renaissance which has sometimes been given to it; although unhappily, from the disorders of times which succeeded his death, this movement met with a serious check.

Louis the Debonnaire, the first heir to the empire, distinguished not more for his ascetic piety than for

his misfortunes resulting from feebleness of will, strove to continue the policy which his great father had initiated. During his troubled reign, Rabanus Maurus, a pupil of Alcuin and graced with the proud but well-deserved title "Preceptor Germaniæ", raised the school of Fulda to a widely-recognized pre eminence; wrote pedagogic works distinguished rather for good sense and clearness of presentation than for any originality of view, which have recently been found worthy to be presented in a German dress; and later as archbishop of Mainz insisted that the clergy of his diocese should preach in the vulgar tongue, "that the common people might be confirmed in their faith and improved in their morals."

Under the favoring care of Charles the Bald, son of Louis, who in the division of the empire inherited the kingdom of France, the intellectual movement still retained some vigor, its most distinguished representatives being Lupus Servatus and John Scotus Erigena.

The former, who was a pupil of Rabanus Maurus and abbot of Ferrieres during the times of the incursions of the Northmen, was held in the highest repute for his character, his diplomatic ability, and above all for his learning and for the distinguished support which he gave to classic studies during the decay of learning that followed the breaking up of the empire.

Scotus Erigena, as his name indicates, was an Irish scholar of even more than the usual Irish independence of opinion. He asserted the claims of classic literature, and gave such prominence to the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle as to attract to it and to him-

self a bitter clerical hostility. He filled the measure of his demerits when invited by Bishop Hincmar to enter the lists in one of the trivial religious controversies which were then so bitterly waged; for he not only dared to assert the claims of reason over mere unsupported authority, but he also used and defended the use of a dialectical method of treatment which was still discountenanced by the church, thus becoming from afar the forerunner of the later scholastic method, though without its servility to authority. On this account his brilliant career ended in obscurity, though it has been asserted on somewhat doubtful authority that he was later active at the court of Alfred the Great.

In the succeeding period learning so far retrograded in Western Europe that the 10th and 11th centuries are considered by some authors the darkest period of the Middle Ages. Yet I am disposed to think that the impulse given to mind by Charlemagne never wholly ceased; that many of the schools which he established continued, though obscurely, to do their work, that in the words of Hallam * “ France seems to have been uniformly though very slowly progressive from the time of Charlemagne; ” that it would even be not impossible to construct a nearly unbroken succession of teachers of some note from Alcuin to William of Champeaux and Abelard, as Mullinger has done †; and that, though the movement of mind took a new form and passed into other and ruder hands than those of the learned class, it was still doing its work

* Middle Ages, C. IX, p. 400.

† Op. Cit., final chapter.

of preparing the way for the 12th century Renaissance.

But while the torch of learning on the continent of Europe seemed about to be extinguished, it was grasped and borne aloft for a time by the English Alfred, who became the representative of the First Renaissance during the last decades of the 9th century. The condition in which he found learning in the south west part of England over which he ruled, and which, according to Hallam, was then the most enlightened portion of the island, has already been mentioned;— he knew not a single clergyman south of the Thames who understood the ordinary prayers or could translate them into English, having merely memorized them as a formula to be used in the church service. If such was the condition of the class nominally learned, what could be looked for from the laity!

Against the prevailing ignorance this energetic king made a valiant struggle during the last two decades of his reign, “intent to leave to the men that came after him a remembrance of himself in good works.” Like Charlemagne he had a keen judgment of the merits of men; and, since learning was at so low an ebb in his own realm, he summoned from abroad men like Grimbold and the Welch Asser, whom he placed at the head of monasteries to instruct his clergy. “He himself superintended a school which he had established for the young nobles of his court,” after the manner of Charlemagne.

Like Charlemagne also he saw the vital necessity, if learning and religion were to obtain any organic hold upon the minds of the people, that both learning and religion should be presented to them in their own

native tongue. "Let us endeavor," he says, "that all the English youth, especially the children of those who are free-born and can educate them, may learn to read English before they take to any employment. Afterwards such as please may learn Latin."*

To accomplish this end, the king himself was forced virtually to create a vernacular prose literature, which he did by translating works like the History of Bede and the Consolations of Boethius. These works he enriched by remarks and additions of his own. Having thus brought the means of learning within the easy reach of his people, it is said, I know not with how much truth, that he required such magistrates as were unable to read to remedy their deficiencies or to give place to more learned men.

Under the fostering care of Alfred the English monasteries became again nurseries of learning and not a few schools were opened. It has even been claimed, but with little show of credibility, that the university of Oxford grew out of a school founded by Alfred.

But the impulse given by him, vigorous though it was, must have been evanescent; for in the time of Dunstan, primate of England towards the close of the century in which Alfred died, Hallam says that none of the clergy knew how to write or translate a Latin letter; and at the time of the Norman conquest the English are described as "rude and almost illiterate", doubtless as a consequence of the Danish invasions. Here as elsewhere learning was suppressed by times of conflict and disorder. Amidst the clash of arms, literature as well as laws was forced to silence.

* Hallam, Middle Ages. C IX, part 1st foot note to page 460, quoted from Spelman-Vita Alfred.



A SCHOOL OF MENDICANT MONKS. (From Cuthbert's Syllabus of Education after a miniature of the 15th century in the Burgundy library Brussels.)
(91)

CHAPTER IV

THE RELAPSE OF THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES, AND CAUSES OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY RENAISSANCE

The first revival of learning in the ninth century was succeeded by nearly two centuries of educational lethargy and ignorance. Learning sank again into neglect, and whatever of it survived seems to have resumed an ecclesiastical character. The episcopal schools in some places still continued; the Benedictine monasteries still taught the few who resorted to them; save perhaps in a few monasteries, like those of Paris and Rheims, Orleans and Erfurt, the staple of instruction in both these classes of schools was, besides religion, the driest and most barren parts of the trivium and quadrivium, presented in barbarous Latin and impressed upon the memory by a free use of the rod.

The good old times of ignorance returned. Says Hallam, "In almost every council, the ignorance of the clergy forms a subject of reproach. It was asserted in one held in 992, that scarcely a person was to be found in Rome itself who knew the first elements of letters." Laurie says, "King, baron, and knight, had a contempt for those who professed even an elementary knowledge of letters." It was in the early part of the eleventh century that the already quoted assertion was made by a high church dignity that some

of his fellow archbishops did not know even the alphabet.

In an autobiographical narration of Guibert de Nogent, quoted by Guizot,* we have a vivid picture of the extreme difficulties encountered even by a young noble, in the last half of the eleventh century, in his attempts to acquire a tolerable education to fit him for the priesthood, as well as of the exceeding incompetency and brutal methods of such teachers as were to be had. There was he says, "so great a scarcity of masters of grammar that, so to speak, scarce one was to be seen in the country, and hardly could they be found in the great towns. He to whom my mother resolved to confide me had learned grammar in a rather advanced age, and was so much the less familiar with this science, as he had devoted himself to it at a later period; but what he wanted in knowledge, he made up for in virtue. My master, altogether unskilful at reciting verses or composing them according to rule, almost every day loaded me with a shower of cuffs and blows, to force me to know what he himself was unable to teach me." He speaks of being beaten until his arms were all black and the skin of his shoulders all raised up and swollen with the blows he had received; yet such was his ardor for learning that when his mother would have interfered, and have had him desist from an effort attended with such barbarous treatment, he said to her "I would rather die than cease learning letters and wishing to be a priest."

The most favorable thing that can be said of this barren period is that in it the germs of a taste for art

* History of Civilization, vol. 3d, p. 94.

appear to have developed somewhat obscurely. Church music, in which the Gregorian tones had now been added to the original music of St. Ambrose, was cultivated with some success, and with a progress towards an art of music. Fine penmanship and the illumination of manuscripts were considerably practised. Carving and painting, and the art of arts, architecture, were preparing the way for the artistic triumphs of succeeding ages.

The first introduction of the Arabic figures into Christian Europe is assigned to this period, though they were little known and less used until some centuries later. This introduction is ascribed to Gerbert, then a teacher in the school at Rheims, but who in 999 became Pope Sylvester II. It is doubtful whether some knowledge of them was not possessed by a few learned men at an earlier period, but it seems certain from Weissenborn's wearisomely learned treatise on the introduction into Europe of our present figures, that neither Gerbert nor those succeeding him for several generations had any knowledge of the use of the cipher, and hence that they were ignorant of the decimal notation.*

1. Chivalry

But while, as we have just seen, the means of intellectual education during the 10th and 11th centuries, were sinking again into disuse, and the knowledge of the liberal arts was neglected and even despised, a new educational agency was rising into prominence, which having its obscure origin in early times and old Germanic customs, now manifested itself in an altered

*See Weissenborn, Einführung der Jetzigen Ziffern in Europa

and more brilliant form as an educative and civilizing force, in the effects which it produced on morals and manners. This agency was the institution of chivalry; an agency the more potent, because, growing out of the circumstances of the times and adapting itself to the modes of thinking and feeling of the age, it worked its way silently among men, and ere they were aware had wrought a great amelioration in the manners of a rude age.

The liberal arts had thus far proved themselves an extrinsic agency, striving for influence among men by no means prepared by previous experience to receive them or to appreciate their benefits. This new educational force, by appealing to motives to which men were at that time keenly alive, as well through the changes wrought by itself as by other influences which it brought in its train, prepared the minds of men for that period of eager intellectual activity which began with the 12th century, and made them in some degree receptive for that literary culture to which they had hitherto been averse.

Hallam has said not more beautifully than truthfully, "There are, if I may so say, three powerful spirits which have from time to time moved over the face of the waters, and given a predominant impulse to the moral sentiments and energies of mankind. These are the spirits of liberty, of religion, and of honor. It was the principal business of chivalry to animate and cherish the last of these three."

In this time real liberty as a world spirit did not exist, for violence and disorder reigned; the strong trampled on the rights of the weak, and wrenched

from each other what the mailed hand was not able to defend, and the idea of settled order under the sanction of definite laws, without which there can be no individual liberty, had not yet been clearly apprehended by men.

The case was not much better with religion, the second of these great controlling spirits; for religion had largely become dogma—dogma too which was rather accepted than understood, embodied in an unknown tongue, and exercising too little influence on the lives of those who professed to believe it; only too inoperative on the actions of those who taught it.

But amongst the stronger class, the feudal lords, the feeling of personal importance, the germ of honor, was vigorously active. This spirit of honor the institution of chivalry which now became prominent made its cardinal principle, and developed it ultimately to those extravagant and even fantastic forms to which, in a later age, the author of *Don Quixote* directed a well-merited ridicule. In the period that we are considering, however, it was doubtless the best and most effective school of moral discipline that the age afforded.

If we read with attention the oaths of chivalry in their developed form, which may be found in Guizot's *History of Civilization*, Vol. 3, Lecture 6th, we shall find in them, exacted from the candidate for knighthood, an observance of a code of moral and social virtues of which those times of lawless violence stood in the deepest need. We here see that, besides personal courage, which was of the very essence of honor, what are most strongly emphasized as the vitally essential characteristics of the chivalrous knight, are the

virtues of loyalty, courtesy, liberality, justice, and respect for women—loyalty which extended not merely to one's relatives, to friends, or to superiors, but which made one's word pledged either to friends or foes, a sacred obligation and stamped a breach of faith as infamous; courtesy which powerfully ameliorated the forms of intercourse among rude men, and lent a tone of refinement even to hostile encounters; liberality which easily degenerated into extravagance and wastefulness, but which nourished the feeling of honor by seeming to free valiant acts from any taint of avaricious self-seeking; justice which bound the true knight, not only to upright dealing with all men, but to become the defender of the weak and helpless when oppressed by power; and a respect for women which expressed itself often in fantastic ways, and which degenerated too readily into licentious gallantry, but which elevated the best and purest of the female sex to an importance that had never before been accorded to them.

It will readily be seen that by familiarizing men's minds with the ideas as estimable and desirable of such moral qualities as justice, loyalty, good faith, steadfastness, and regard for the helpless, and of such social virtues as courtesy to equals and reverence for women and for superiors, chivalry was fitted to become an effective promoter of morals and civilization; and that although all these virtues were doubtless at first imperfectly embodied in practice, they were likely still to have a powerful influence on the development of a higher type of general character. How many of us, it may be asked, even in this enlightened age, com-

pletely exemplify in our lives the principles that we profess and even reverence? Thus the virtues which chivalry exalted and on which it founded an order of personal nobility, even though incompletely practised, as from human frailty virtues are sure to be, slowly permeated mediæval society; and, by softening rude manners and laying the foundations of order and of law, aided in preparing the minds of men for the reception of literary culture.

To this also a strong re-enforcement was given by the springing up of chivalric poetry, which added its praises to chivalric virtues, and graced with the charms of verse the heroic deeds inspired by those virtues; and which thus, while extending the influence of chivalry, gradually turned the minds of men in the direction of literature. Men who had come to enjoy the lays of the Troubadours and Minnesingers, were more likely to relish the poems of Homer and Virgil and Ovid.

But chivalry needed schools in which its virtues should be inculcated, its exercises made familiar, and its special culture promoted—for it had a culture of its own. Such schools, the Castle schools, sprang up soon after the time of Charlemagne, taking their rise in the interior of castles as “a spontaneous outgrowth of feudal manners.” The sons of vassals were sent to the castle of the Suzerain or great feudal lord to be brought up and trained in company with his sons; and thus, while being effective pledges for the loyalty of their fathers, they became familiar with the life of the castle, its principles, and its usages; they passed through all its grades of service as pages and esquires;

and finally when deemed ripe were admitted to the ranks of knights at the hands of their lord.

In this school were impressed by example and persistent practice those virtues which were considered essential to the character of the good and valiant knight. Here was imparted the special semi-literary culture of the castle, poetry and the art of verse-making, familiarity with heroic and sacred legends, skill in playing chess and in touching the lute, the art of carving skilfully at table, and the courteous manners which befitted the knightly dignity. The largest part in this castle education, however, was naturally devoted to perfecting the youths in all knightly exercises. Thus that physical education and that care for the body and its capabilities, which the ascetic spirit of earlier times had so neglected and contemned, and which it still continued to despise as unworthy of a spiritual being, the destined heir of immortality, was revived in the castle schools and never again fell into entire neglect.

Karl Schmidt intimates a belief that the young candidates for knighthood received also the elements of a scholastic education in the monasteries. This idea seems to me in a high degree impossible. If we recall to mind the account, given by Guibert de Nogent and already quoted (page 94) of the exceeding difficulty in finding any means of instruction encountered near the close of this period by a young noble who ardently desired learning, that he might become a priest, it will probably be conceded that there was little likely to be any culture of this kind among the mass of young men who were in training for a purely martial career



INITIATION INTO THE ORDER OF KNIGHTHOOD (From Cassell's
History of England 1833)

and who lived in a society where learning was disregarded if not contemned. We should also, in forming an opinion on this matter, take into account the prevailing lawlessness of this age, and the fact that during a considerable part of it all warlike and religious interests were absorbed in the crusades. With all this in view, it will be easy to admit that the humbler our estimate of the extension of literary learning among the nobility during the 10th and 11th centuries, the nearer it will be likely to accord with truth.

We ought not to take leave of chivalric education and of the better and more civilized spirit which it was slowly making influential among men, without emphasizing a characteristic which has not yet been mentioned, but in virtue of which it approximated, remotely indeed yet obviously, to the Christian humanitarian ideal. What I allude to is the fact that not only was the powerful world spirit which animated chivalry the spirit of honor, but it was the spirit of individual, of personal, of independent honor. During the time of the crusades it gained its fullest expression, in making of the knights an order of personal nobility, whose rights and whose elevation were everywhere recognized. The knight went into battle or undertook perilous adventures with the proud consciousness that he was not an undistinguishable atom in a mass, but an important personality, whose deeds, if worthy, would be noted and mayhap sung, and would redound to the increase of the honor in which he was held.

It seems not unnatural to fancy that this feeling of individuality, a relic of the old Germanic spirit of

independence which Tacitus records, and which was pushed to an extreme in feudal society and in chivalry, was the natural reaction against the spirit of nationalism which had ruled the ancient world, and that it paved the way for the acceptance in much later times of the humanitarian ideal long latent in Christianity. Thus the excess of individuality neutralized the excessive spirit of nationalism, and prepared for the nobler ideal which should harmonize the two, being transformed into freedom and patriotism.

2. Growth of Municipalities

During the latter part of the period we are now considering, municipalities begin to emerge from the confusion, and to claim an increasing importance. In France, where they gained influence considerably earlier than in Germany, they had, according to Guizot, a threefold origin. In some cases they were the obscure survivals of old Roman municipalities. In others, like Orleans, they were cities which had been nourished and encouraged by the grant of special privileges and by freedom from arbitrary exactions, whether in consideration of money payments or through a more than usually wise policy of their feudal lords, who found their own importance increased and their needs subserved by the existence within their domains of settled industries and a growing trade. The third class included towns whose citizens, wearied by the tyranny and robberies of their rude masters, had wrenched from them by force of arms certain chartered rights in virtue of which they managed their own internal

affairs, and stood ready to maintain their own interests by a military organization of their citizens.

In all of these municipalities, with the attainment of a measure of security, industries began to spring up and trade to appear, both of which demanded some means of education for boys that they might be fitted to pursue with greater success the avocations of their fathers. Hence town schools began to appear, in which were taught such elements as reading, writing, simple reckoning, and in some cases a little geography. The teachers were undoubtedly clerics.

The language that was used in these early town schools is said to have been the vernacular, as would seem necessary that they might subserve their purpose of supplying the pressing needs of trade and industries. In England, however, in the 12th century, the schools of London used Latin as the vehicle of instruction, and the boys seem to have been fitted for their business careers by engaging in hair-splitting disputes about ablatives and gerunds. In Germany also, the citizen schools which arose in the 12th and 13th centuries were Latin schools, to which were attached as preparatory schools the so-called "writing schools", genuine schools of the vernacular, in which were taught reading, writing, and reckoning as a preparation for trades. In the Latin school, Latin naturally reigned supreme, associated with religion, and the method of disputation, borrowed from the Scholastics, had a paramount place. Their privileges, however, such as they were, were open without cost to the poor as well as to the rich. These last named schools belonged to a somewhat later period than the 10th and 11th cen-

turies, to which for the sake of clearness I have desired in this chapter to confine our attention.* It has however seemed most convenient to mention them here.

The period to which attention has here been briefly directed, was apparently barren of interest from an educational point of view; and yet the two facts which we have just been considering, chivalry and the rise of municipalities, were amongst the most important preparations for the extraordinary intellectual movement which the 12th century ushered in, and which we now come to describe. This movement was the Scholastic Renaissance, the second renaissance, if we account the revival of schools under Charlemagne and Alfred as the first, as I think we properly may.

This Renaissance was characterized by a remarkable and wide-spread intellectual activity, which, beginning outside the ranks of the regular clergy, presently swept them also into its vortex; and which, although it took a peculiar form and expended itself in seemingly barren efforts, was yet marked by an energy of intellectual life that was full of promise for the future, whenever better means of culture should be presented for its eager strivings. It was made especially illustrious by the origin of many still famous universities, like those of Bologna, Oxford, and Cambridge, followed by such great German universities as Prague, Vienna, Heidelberg, and Leipsic at a somewhat later date.

Like all great historic movements, this intellectual

* For the rise of municipalities, consult Hallam, *Middle Ages*, C. 2d part 2d. The Italian municipalities, as we shall see, had interesting relations with the earliest universities, e. g., Bologna.

revolution had its forerunners and efficient causes. Two of these have already been touched upon in considering the period of barrenness which preceded. These were, *first* the rise of chivalry with the higher moral standard that it set up, the refinement of manners that it initiated by its principle of courtesy, and the germs of literary taste that were fostered by chivalric poetry; and *second*, the growth of municipalities endowed with chartered or conceded rights, busied with industries which tended to an ever-increasing diversification, and feeling the need for their success of a kind of civic knowledge quite unlike anything that was presented in the sparsely distributed schools that existed, whose chief aim was to subserve the faith and to train the clergy to perform the services of the church in the consecrated language of the church.

To the internal polity of the municipalities, Professor Laurie also ascribes an interesting influence exerted upon the inner organization of the universities, which were the nurseries and representatives of the 12th century Renaissance. This influence was due to the manner in which their powers and privileges were gained. From the disorders of the times in which no settled laws and no generally recognized supreme authority existed, the towns as they arose had been obliged as the very condition of their existence to assume certain powers of organization, internal direction, and control, without which no united life could have continued, and no individual could have pursued his vocation unhindered.

These powers thus assumed and exercised with the general concurrence of the members of the communities, soon grew into customs of the towns, and were

essentially democratic in their character; in many cases this kind of internal organization extended itself to the various industries carried on within the towns. Thus grew up the Guilds of the Middle Ages some of which still exist in the cities of Europe. These guild rights and powers, thus at first tacitly assumed from the necessities of the case, when they came to be noticed by the supreme authority had already grown into immemorial usages, and were then regulated, confirmed, or even extended by royal charters

To the example afforded by this guild organization, which had specially abundant instances in Italy, and to the mode in which it originated in the assumption of necessary powers of self-government, Professor Laurie in his "Rise and Constitution of Universities" with some probability refers the privileges and discipline of the earlier universities.

3. The Crusades

A third cause which was highly influential in rousing Europe from the intellectual torpor in which it had long been sunk, may be found in the Crusades, that offspring born of union of religious fanaticism with the chivalric love of adventure. These wonderful religious expeditions gave a new impulse to intellectual life in many ways. They broke up effectually and forever the isolation which had resulted from feudal manners, which had sundered not merely distinct nationalities but also the various members of the same nationality, and which therefore prevented all that active movement of spirits, that lively curiosity, inquiry, and exchange of diverse experiences which

we behold where there is a free intermingling of peoples.

This isolation, which had been one great cause of the darkness that brooded over Europe, the Crusades brought forever to an end. Princes and peasants, feudal nobles and burghers, from all the Christian nationalities of western Europe, were united in the bonds of a common enterprise and inspired by a common purpose. For the first time in ages the various peoples of Europe and even men from neighborhoods not widely separated, really looked into each other's faces and saw each other as they were—recognized that kindred blood flowed in their veins and that they were animated by impulses kindled by a common faith.

The barriers once broken down, there began an even freer commerce of ideas. Experiences gained under the most diverse circumstances and from the most various modes of life were actively compared in the companionship of arms; and a whole new world of ideas was opened and an intellectual quickening gained which was fraught with important consequences for the future of Europe.

Nor did this intellectual impulse come only from the intermingling with their comrades. They traversed wide realms before unknown to them. They saw the wonders of Byzantine architecture and art, and the splendor of that Saracenic culture which they had come to combat. Some dim sense, at least, of the vastness of the earth and its interests, of the worth of those sciences, of the art and poetry and philosophy of which they were ignorant, found access to their minds; and when they finally returned to

their homes, they were no longer the same men who had set forth on their wild pilgrimage to the empty sepulchre of the risen Christ. New ideas and higher aspirations were awakened in many hearts; new yearnings after a knowledge that might sweeten human life and render it better worth living stirred many a more generous spirit, not inclined to an ascetic waste of life; and the disposition was aroused which prompted the youth of the laity to flock by the thousands from all parts of western Europe to any new centre of learning of whose existence the rumor was brought to their ears.

What if, as Gibbon alleges, a new swarm of legends and superstitions was brought back to Europe on the returning tide of the Crusades. The intellectual awakening which they had caused was richly worth any temporary corruption of the faith by imported superstitions to which ignorant credulity is always prone; it could indeed be trusted soon to correct effectually any corruption, and to cause wholesome modifications in faith itself; for to errors of opinion thought alone can bring a sure corrective: mental lethargy alone is hopeless of cure.

4. The Saracenic Schools

A fourth cause of the intellectual awakening of the 12th century may be found in an impulse proceeding from the great Saracenic schools of Spain and from the high grade of culture which there existed. Even in the 10th century these schools by their eminence had tempted some ambitious youth, like Gerbert, to brave the mysterious dangers that tales of necromancy and

devil's lore had frightened ignorant Europe withal, that they might bring back something of value from these forbidden sources of learning. But after the first Crusades, the numbers who visited the Mohammedan schools evidently became greater—possibly encouraged by the advancement of Gerbert to the popedom—and a new and sharper stimulus to progress was added to the impulse given to mind by the Crusades. The reality of the influence exerted at this time by the Saracens on neighboring Europe may be inferred with some probability from the scholastic direction which the intellectual activity in Europe at once took on, a direction which in this age prevailed in the Mohammedan schools of Spain. It was natural then as now that learners should copy the practice of their most influential teachers; and thus a highly stimulating method was added to the pedagogic resources of Europe.*

To these four facts may be added as a circumstance which greatly facilitated the new intellectual movement and aided to make it general, the universal domination of the Catholic church and the universal acceptance of its consecrated language, the Latin, as a common medium of communication among the learned.

By the universal sway which the church exercised over the minds of her faithful sons, travel was made easier and safer for the many thousand youths who, as

* Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, Vol. I, pp 35, gives as the cause of the special form of intellectual activity, i. e., the Scholastic form, the use of the favorite dialectic method, long familiar as part of the Trivium, on the Platonic metaphysical question of the nature of *Universals*, which was discussed with great fury because of its bearing on Theological dogmas, i. e., Transubstantiation, and so brought Scholastic Theology to greater prominence than Scholastic Philosophy

students under the protecting aegis of the church, desired to pursue their studies at distant seats of learning; whilst, amid the multiplicity of languages and dialects that had now sprung up, the common language of the learned served as an accepted means of communication, as well in the schools as in the monasteries, which were the hostleries of travelling scholars.

CHAPTER V

THE TWELFTH CENTURY REVIVAL OF LEARNING AND THE MEDIEVAL UNIVERSITIES

The most interesting fact as well as the truest representative of that remarkable intellectual movement in Europe, which began in the 12th century, and whose inciting and favoring causes we have just examined, was unquestionably the rise of the mediæval universities. These not only constituted the most unique and permanent product of the movement, but in their method and subject-matter they also truly represented its spirit and its results. Hence they merit at our hands a somewhat careful examination, though our limits will permit little detail.*

That the vigorous wakening of Europe from its long lethargy should have been followed, as a natural consequence, by the revival of old schools that had become dormant, and by the multiplication of new ones, would be precisely what we might look for; and this is doubtless the most wide reaching form in which the movement of mind found expression; but the

* Those specially interested in this subject will do well to read *The Rise and Constitution of Universities* by Prof S S Laurie, and Compayré's *Abe-lard*, and to consult Denifé, *Die Universitäten des Mittelalters*, the first volume of Huber's *English Universities*, the first two chapters of Mullin-ger's *The University of Cambridge*, Lete's *History of the University of Ox-ford*, Vol 4 of Von Raumer's *Geschichte der Pädagogik*, translated in full in *Barnard's Journal of Education*, and the first portion of Paulsen's *Geschichte des Gelehrten Unterrichts*. Also Rashdell, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*

reasons are not so obvious why it should have resulted in the springing up in many parts of Europe of those specialized high schools which we call universities—a type of schools of which Europe had had no examples for at least six centuries, save in the Saracenic schools of Spain.

Professor Laurie assigns reasons for this fact which we may profitably examine. The first reason that he assigns is, “that the growth of traditionary learning accumulated so great a weight on the subjects that most interest the mind of man and are most essential to his welfare as a member of society, as to demand specialization;” and that thus, when thought awakened and men became conscious of their spiritual and social needs, specialized schools, that is universities, arose by a kind of inner necessity.

I do not wholly agree with the learned professor in the emphasis that he lays upon this as a cause of university origination; for as a matter of fact I doubt whether there was any such accumulation of traditionary learning as he seems to assume, in at least two of the departments in which specialization earliest appeared, viz., medicine and jurisprudence. The former was indeed somewhat studied and practised in the monastics, but it was in the works of Galen and Hippocrates, to which nothing seems to have been added; any addition, in truth, would have run counter to the entire spirit of the times, which was wholly subservient to authority. The Saracens during the Middle Ages were famous for their skill in medicine which they derived from Grecian sources, and Gibbon credits them with the origination of the first special-

ized school of medicine at Salernum in 1060 A. D. Laurie, who assigns the origin of this school to the same date, ascribes the first instruction given there to monks, and later to one Constantine, who had returned from the east stored with varied learning. In either case we have no indication of an accumulation of traditionary lore.

The case is still weaker with jurisprudence, which during these ages had sunk into the greatest neglect, so that in those centuries when might was the chief source of right, the very tradition of the Roman civil law would seem to have been well-nigh lost, or at best to have been confined to a few obscure Italian schools. Yet it was in these two departments, in which we have little encouragement to look for an accumulation of traditionary learning, that special schools first made their appearance, for medicine at Salernum, and at Bologna for law.

In theology however and in this alone, the case was different; for here there had indeed accumulated a vast body of ecclesiastical lore and ecclesiastical tradition which stood in great need of being sifted by an age of rising intelligence; and it was sifted during succeeding times, with the result however rather of adding to its bulk, than of condensing by a just discrimination and thus increasing its value.

I am therefore inclined to think that the case might perhaps be more exactly stated in this form; that as intelligence increased, and the state of society became more settled, and industries and trade assumed larger proportions,—life and its concomitant wealth were felt to be more valuable; and the need was realized

for a more settled and systematic and complete system of laws than was then anywhere in force; and that hence ambitious young men were ready to flock eagerly to any centre of learning where it was reported that these desirable knowledges might be gained. As theology had long been nearly an exclusive object of attention, its rise to prominence under better teachers in a natural centre like Paris, hardly needs a theory for its explanation.

The second fact to which Professor Laurie ascribes the rise of universities and the particular form that they early assumed, is doubtless to a limited extent valid; for we have good reason to believe that the growth of an anti-monastic feeling among the laity led to the pursuit of the great leading specialities in schools not under direct clerical domination. There can be little doubt that the returning crusaders brought back from the East, not only a new supply of legends and superstitions, but also in not a few instances a skepticism, which degenerated sometimes into downright disbelief.

Monasteries increased indeed and according to Hallam superstition took on its most monstrous forms, in the same century that witnessed the rise of universities; but side by side with this fact, running parallel with it, and probably heightened by it, was the fact of the growth of a skeptical spirit which gave birth to a numerous brood of heresies, and held the monks and clergy in disrepute. It seems quite probable that it was from this latter class, inclined to skepticism and tinctured with latent dislike of monks and monastic restrictions, that the crowds who flocked to the incipient universities were considerably recruited. This

may at least plausibly account for their measurable freedom from clerical control in times when all other schools were so controlled. Yet when we consider all the facts in the early growth of the universities, I am inclined to think that we may easily push this idea too far.

We may admit Professor Laurie's third cause, viz., "the actual specializing of the leading studies," law, medicines, and theology, at certain centres where instruction was open to all comers without monastic restrictions, with its tendency in the state of feeling which then existed to attract to such centres crowds of eager young men, "as the chief key to the explanation of the rise of the higher university schools". It would be well, however, to look upon it merely as a starting point from which to date the origin of the university *as such*, since without this limitation every special school of law, medicine, or theology might be regarded as an incipient university.

Professor Laurie's idea of the constitution of the early universities seems, in the main, eminently clear, comprehensive, and satisfactory, accounting as it does for all the known prominent facts in their early history. His idea may thus be briefly summarized: (1) they were specialized schools of some one or more of the great professional studies; (2) they were generally at the seats of pre-existing schools of the liberal arts which ultimately were absorbed into their organization; (3) they were open to all comers without distinction of nationality; (4) they were free from *direct* clerical domination and especially at the outset from monastic restrictions, and (5) after the example of the existing guilds they assumed to themselves at first

needful powers of self-government, direction, and protection, which at a later date were confirmed by ecclesiastical or royal authority. We shall be able more easily to give a brief yet reasonably clear account of these remarkable institutions by following in their order the five parts of this description.

With few exceptions they first appear as centres of instruction in some one of the three great professional specialties; as for example, Salerno in medicine, Bologna in civil law, Paris in theology, and Montpellier in both medicine and law.

Though lectures in civil law were early given in Oxford, its real specialty was philosophy, with which theology was intimately connected; this was also true of Cambridge; and in later centuries the professional specialties never so prominently characterized these institutions as they did the continental universities. Their honorable distinction is that they have been best known as great schools for an advanced and non-professional culture. Yet no one would deny them the university name and rank.

Hence it would not seem that the prominence of professional specialties was at all vital as a characteristic of universities save in later German opinions. In process of time the continental universities added other specialties to that with which they had begun, until finally most of them had the four faculties, arts, theology, medicine, and law; and by 1300 a university was considered incomplete that did not provide for instructing and graduating students in all these faculties.* On this basis, however, Paris, "the mother

* Laurie, *Rise and Constitution of Universities*, p. 166

of universities", was incomplete, having no faculty of civil law.

The origin of all the earliest universities is obscure, being lost in the mists of antiquity. Consider for example the universities of Bologna, of Paris, and of Oxford; it is impossible to assign any precise date when they may be said to have begun. The University of Bologna, in her recent invitation to the celebration of her eighth centennial, speaks of this uncertainty and fixes upon the date 1087 as the nearest approximation. A like obscurity rests upon the origin of Paris, of Oxford, and of Cambridge.

Much of this uncertainty arises from the fact that they were off-shoots or, in a limited sense, continuations of schools of the liberal arts that had long existed. Thus Bologna was an off-shoot of such a school that was of unknown antiquity; Paris grew out of a school connected with the cathedral of Notre Dame that may possibly have originated in the impulse given by Charlemagne; and Oxford is supposed by some, on very insufficient and even mythical grounds, to be the higher development of a school possibly as old as Alfred the Great.†

From what has been said it will readily be understood that the earliest universities were not founded as later institutions of the kind were, by charters and grants conferred by popes or rulers; they simply grew and in some cases had existed long and become famous before they received a formal governmental recogni-

† See Denislé, *Die Universitäten, des Mittelalters*, pp 238-241.

See also Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge, etc.*, p 80, on the obscurity of the origin of Oxford and Cambridge; and Lyte, *History of Oxford*, C. IX

tion. The process of their formation was analogous to that by which the "Schools of Athens" grew out of the teachings of the sophists and philosophers. Some man of talent, learning, and enthusiasm for his subject, began to lecture at the seat of an existing school on his favorite specialty, using a new method suited to the needs of the age; and by attracting to himself a swarm of eager learners, started a movement which ended in a famous university.

Savigny in his "History of the Roman Law" gives this graphic account of the beginnings of these institutions: "It would be wholly erroneous were we to consider the earliest universities of the Middle Ages as institutions of learning in our sense, i. e., as foundations in which a prince or a city had chiefly in view to provide instruction for the native population, the participation of strangers however being permitted. Such was not the case, but when a man inspired with an ardent love of teaching had gathered around him a multitude of scholars eager to learn, there easily sprung up a succession of teachers; the circle of hearers increased and thus a permanent school was established wholly by a kind of inner necessity."*

Thus Irnerius at Bologna, by his instruction in civil law, and William of Champeaux or his pupil Abelard in Paris, by lectures on theology and philosophy, using the dialectic method which earlier from its theological implications had discredited Scotus Erigena, gave the impulse out of which grew great universities. The

* Geschichte des Römischen Rechts im Mittelalter, Vol. 3, p. 154. This passage is quoted by Mullinger in his History of Cambridge University p. 72, as also by Laurie, Rise and Constitution of Universities, p. 168.

interest that attaches to the more ancient schools on which they grew, consists solely in the fact that sooner or later these schools became the faculty of arts, i. e., preparatory schools in the developed universities.

From the manner in which they originated and from the circumstances of the times, these incipient universities were open to all comers, and soon ceasing to be local or even national, they became international.

If we recall the condition of things that existed in Western Europe at this epoch, as already described (page 113), the movement of mind, the vividly awakened interest in a higher learning corresponding to the improving conditions of existence, and the greater facilities for intercourse now afforded; and add to all these facts, the small number of the men throughout Europe who were fitted to give any advanced special instruction, and that "*oral* instruction was almost the only path to comprehensive knowledge", since centuries were yet to elapse before printing was invented to bring to one's very door whatever of value was anywhere known—it will readily be understood why such prodigious numbers should have flocked to some of the more famous centres of learning from regions very widely separated. Thus we hear of 10,000 and 20,000 at Bologna, and of 30,000 each at Paris and Oxford.

Lyte however in his recent History of the University of Oxford shows that this was a gross exaggeration of the numbers at Oxford, as it probably was for Paris and Bologna. To account for these great assemblages, we are told that great numbers of mere boys went to the universities for quite elementary training, inso-

much that Paris was obliged to refuse to receive lads under twelve years of age, a fact which suggests the paucity and the inferiority of local schools; also that the college servants, as well as the retainers of the richer students, were matriculated that they might enjoy the privileges and immunities of the university. Now although these students, drawn together from the most diverse nationalities by the fact that famous seats of learning were open freely to all comers, presumably had some facility in the use of Latin, still it was only natural that those who used the same native dialect should group themselves together, should occupy contiguous lodgings or even erect lodgings for themselves, should have in many respects a community of interests, and should lead a common life. Hence arose the "*nations*" which make so great a figure in many of the mediæval universities, and which would seem at times almost to have been thought an essential feature of a university.

Thus Paris had four nations, and these had erected halls for their own accommodations long before the university had any place save a borrowed church in which to hold meetings of its regents. Bologna had two great groups of nations, the Cisalpine and Transalpine, each with many subdivisions, and these through their representatives exerted a controlling influence on university affairs, governing the teachers as well as the students. When two centuries later the first German universities were founded, the idea of nations as a feature of university organization still had such hold that they were provided for there also, though the membership was sure to be mostly local.

Amongst these groups of students thus freely called together, there was naturally at the outset a freedom of studying when and what they pleased, untrammelled by any prescribed courses, wholly analogous to what we have seen in the universities of antiquity,* with the like concomitants of unobtrusive industry and obtrusive idleness, tumults, and disorders.

Parallel with this perfect freedom of study was also a like freedom of teaching. At first, any man who felt that he had desirable knowledge which he wished to impart could hire a room and collect about himself a group of students; if his lectures proved acceptable his audiences might swell to great dimensions and give him a wide reputation.

In the paragraph from which a quotation was given above, Savigny calls attention to an inconvenience inherent in this freedom of teaching in universities, inasmuch as "Their special reputation depended in part on accidental, personal, changeable conditions. A few teachers of great talent could elevate a school, and under the unskilful hands of their immediate successors it might again decline. For the universities stood quite alone, based upon themselves, without connection with a thorough national culture, and without the indispensable substratum of learned schools."

A remedy for this inconvenience was found later, for when certificates of attainments came to be given they took the form of a "licencia docendi", without which it is not likely that a man would be permitted to teach in a university. If however the institution granting the license had been recognized by the pope,

* Williams's History of Ancient Education, page 135.

it was valid throughout Christendom, and gave the licentiate liberty to teach wherever he could attract hearers. The licenses of Paris and Bologna naturally had the highest consideration.

Thus I have considered as natural incidents of the fact that the universities were open to all comers, both the formation of the "nations", and the freedom of teaching and of learning which early characterized them.

The universities differed markedly from the Christian schools that had existed in the preceding centuries, and from most of those in the centuries that followed, in their freedom from direct clerical control, and especially in their freedom from monastic restrictions.

The most famous schools that had existed heretofore had been in monasteries and had been subject to strict monastic rules; and though from the time of Charlemagne episcopal schools had assumed a relatively greater prominence, they were also under rigid clerical dominance, held in churches and taught by clerics, and mostly subserved mere ecclesiastical purposes. The new institutions had views much wider than the horizon of the church, views which embraced the extending needs of a busy world, amongst which the needs of the church, though usually prominent, constituted but one of many. To accomplish these various purposes, the universities must be free from the domination of any single influence, and the characteristic that is now under consideration sprang from the necessities of the situation, quite as much possibly as from any rising spirit of hostility to clerical control among the laity.

The teachers were doubtless largely of the clerical order; the students were mostly adherents of the church, at least in name, and many of them also clergy; but they exercised influence in university affairs not as clergy or as churchmen, but merely as members of the university. In Bologna indeed it has been said that no member of a monastic order could hold the rectorship; yet after 1250 A. D. it seems probable that the rector must have been a clerical person, since he had jurisdiction over clerics. To the freedom of life which the lack of monastic restrictions permitted were doubtless due most of the disorders and riots which make so considerable a figure in early university history, and which, from the still rude manners of the times, as well as from the custom of carrying weapons, too frequently ended in bloodshed. Young men unused to freedom learned to use it by at first using it badly, a thing not unknown to modern times.

The earliest universities, as we have seen, were not founded, but sprang up as a kind of spontaneous growth. As these voluntary assemblages increased in membership, they experienced the necessity of some internal organization, some settled order, some generally recognized power, as well for the purposes of self-protection from rude and not always friendly surroundings, as for the attainment of their scholarly aims. Hence we early find them exercising powers and enjoying privileges needful for their purposes, making of themselves republics of letters in the midst of the cities where they were established, and even extending their authority over their members to many things

which are usually matters of municipal jurisdiction. They had their own officers elected in various ways at different universities, with a rector at the head, their own statutes, and even their own judges and prison for the trial and punishment of offenders.

These remarkable privileges have been plausibly ascribed to the assumption of powers in imitation of the guilds of trades, and especially those of travelling merchants, that then existed in southern and western Europe. It is evident however that such assumed powers would be in their very nature purely local and held on the precarious tenure of local toleration.

The recent and exhaustive researches of Deniflé* show that far too great emphasis has been laid on the idea of assumption of powers of internal organization and government. These assemblages of teachers and students evidently early felt the need of some more efficient and far-reaching means of protection than their own tacit agreements; for by the middle of the 12th century we see the Bolognese seeking and obtaining from the emperor the important privileges of secure residence while at the university, of choosing their tribunal in cases of accusation, and of safe-conduct in their journeys to and from the university city.

Yet the student associations in Bologna, largely composed of mature men, were doubtless formed on the model of the Italian guild; and their early resort to the emperor proves how precarious they found their assumption of privileges. The university of Paris likewise evidently had privileges granted by the French king in the 12th century, although no records of them

* Die Universitäten des Mittelalters.



AN OUTER MONASTIC SCHOOL (From Cubberley's Syllabus,
taken from Lacroix)

exist earlier than 1200 A. D., since such privileges are assigned as reasons for the great frequentation of its schools, and since members of the schools defended them even by secessions as their ancient rights conferred by kings and popes. The associations of arts students and masters to form nations, which most resemble guilds, it may be remarked, seem not to have assumed any definite form in Paris till the 13th century, and they bear certain marks of having been not of spontaneous but artificial formation.

As concerns the internal organization of the universities, it was evidently the result of a slow internal growth, the aggregation of masters teaching the same subjects gradually developing faculties, and these, by a certain concert of action, forming a university, to which was finally granted the power to use a seal in attestation of its acts. Paris certainly, according to the researches of Denifé, had no generally recognized head until the 14th century, when the rector of the nations finally became the head of the entire university but with powers by no means great.

From all this it will be obvious that though the example of the guilds probably influenced to some extent the internal polity of Bologna and some other Italian universities of early date, this can hardly be true of Paris and the French universities fashioned after its model. The course of development naturally differed in different countries; and the numerous guilds existing at that period in Bologna could hardly fail to have their influence on the thousands of young men who flocked to that centre of learning. To this should be added the fact that the Bolognese nations and their

special privileges were limited to students who were not natives of Bologna.

When collisions arose with the local authorities the very poverty of the universities was a source of strength. As for ages they had no buildings of their own, no apparatus and no equipment of their own save learned teachers who lectured in rooms hired for the purpose, they were naturally in light marching order; and they could easily coerce their opponents in the cities to whom their trade was very valuable, by the threat of removing elsewhere if they were seriously interfered with. This threat was often resorted to and usually with the desired effect, though more than once we read of serious secessions in cases of unreconciled disputes, whether with the local authorities or within their own body.* Indeed the danger of secessions was felt to be so great at Bologna that the municipality strove to bind the university to itself by requiring of the professors an oath not to teach elsewhere.†

Besides, as the universities grew strong in numbers and reputation, they naturally became greater objects of interest to popes and princes, who hastened to attach these rising powers to themselves by not only confirming the privileges of autonomy and jurisdiction which had already been assumed or granted, but by giving wider powers and range of influence, by granting sources of revenue, and by according protection to students and their property on journeys as well as in residence. The papal bulls also made their degrees,

* See Lyte, *History of the University of Oxford*, pp. 41, 98, etc., for secessions and power of poverty.

† Denifé, *Die Universitäten des Mittelalters*.

especially the valued *licencia docendi*, universally valid.

It would carry us too far for our more general purpose, to go into the internal organization, means of discipline, privilege, and sources of revenue of these early institutions, although they have exerted a profound influence on all the more recent European universities which have been founded since the beginning of the fourteenth century, among which are numbered all the universities of Gemany.

Such then were the prominent facts which characterized the origin and constitution of these famous ancient schools. The names that were early applied to them were various, *studium generale* being the most usual. A few words will here be in place as to what was the essence of an university according to mediæval ideas. Karl Schmidt says it was "the united sciences", that is, the great professional branches, theology, medicine, and jurisprudence; he however admits that the term *studium generale*, i. e., university, did not necessarily point to a totality of these sciences, and calls attention to the fact that these schools were open to all comers.

Karl von Raumer suggests that the name may have signified the general acceptance of their degrees, and especially the valued *licencia docendi*. He says, "It was this authorization especially, which, according to the earlier view, the pope alone could give because he stood at the head of all christendom. From this may also originate the name *studium generale*, not because the institution comprehended all the four faculties, but because the graduates of a university authorized by the pope were recognized as such by all the Chris-

tian universities of Europe, and had the right to teach anywhere.”

Professor Laurie feels quite sure that *studium generale* meant a higher, specialized, and self-governing school, open to all the world, free from monastic restrictions or canonical rule, and endowed with certain privileges, among which was included the right of promotion, that is, of granting degrees.

As the last definition contains whatever is of much significance in both the others, we may safely accept it as fairly descriptive, though it is quite possible that it contains more than the idea originally included. According to Denifé, pp. 1-29, the term seems originally to have emphasized the fact that certain institutions were open to all who desired to study, to which the idea of privileges came soon to be added.

We may the more willingly accept Laurie's definition of a mediæval university, with which that of Denifé substantially coincides, because von Raumer's would postpone the real origin of universities to the date of papal recognition, when in point of fact they had, in several instances, existed and exercised their privileges long before, besides which at least five were founded by imperial authorization, without any papal confirmation; while Schmidt's conception would exclude from the list of universities institutions which did not give prominence to professional specialties.

The antiquity of some of the best-known of the mediæval universities, is a matter of no small interest. In 1400 A. D. 44 universities were already in existence, of which 10 or 12 were earlier than 1300 A. D. Bologna was a noted school of law, probably before

the close of the 11th century. Its late centennial was celebrated as from 1087 A. D. The University of Paris existed as early as the beginning of the 12th century, privileges were confirmed to it by both king and pope before 1180 A. D., and degrees were conferred before the century closed. Montpellier was a famous school of medicine in 1137, in 1181 it was declared to be open to all comers in full freedom, and its first statutes date from 1220 A. D. Oxford existed as an institution in which were taught philosophy, theology, and civil law, as early as 1150 A. D.; was expressly mentioned in 1201 A. D. as a university with several thousand students; and in the 13th century was blamed by Roger Bacon for the preponderance there given to the study of civil law. These few well-known universities, which by no means exhaust the list, will suffice to show the antiquity of some mediæval universities.

The earliest German universities were all founded by spiritual or temporal authorities, and hence the dates of their origin are not uncertain. Those of some of the earlier and best known, omitting Cologne and Erfurt which no longer exist, are as follows: Prague 1348, Vienna 1365, Heidelberg 1386, and Leipsic 1409, largely by a secession from Prague. The University of Berlin, as is generally known, though now one of the largest and most famous of them all, is a comparatively modern creation, having been founded in 1809.

CHAPTER VI

STUDIES, METHODS, AND DISCIPLINE OF THE MEDIÆVAL UNIVERSITIES

We have now seen that the early universities grew from obscure beginnings, assuming powers needful for self-government which later were confirmed and even extended as rights by princes and popes; that amongst these rights was the right of self-government and of jurisdiction over their own members, even in cases of crime; that they soon acquired the rights of prescribing studies and of conferring degrees which were of universal validity, and that security for persons and property of students and for their servants was guaranteed to them in journeys to and from as well as within the university precincts. To this may be added that they often received legacies and also grants from popes and princes of sources of revenue, that usually they were freed from taxes and other municipal burdens, and that those early established became models that were imitated in the organization of those founded later.

We have now to examine what use they made of these extraordinary privileges, i. e., (1) what was the nature of the subjects taught in them; (2) what mode of teaching and learning they pursued; (3) what was their discipline and what the state of morals that prevailed; (4) what indirect effects aside from studies

pursued the universities produced on education and civilization; and (5) the profound changes wrought in them by the invention of printing and by the revival of classical learning, and their early attitude towards the latter. We shall be fully warranted in this examination, not only by the circumstance that the universities and their teachings are by far the most important and influential facts in the history of education during the four centuries which preceded 1500 A. D., but also because their studies and methods vitally affected all instruction given elsewhere.

The subjects pursued in the mediæval universities divide themselves into two great groups, viz., the arts, which were the culture studies with no special professional bearing, and the sciences, which comprised the three professional branches, theology, jurisprudence, and medicine, regarded by most investigators as constituting the distinctive notes of an university.

The arts, or culture studies, were the seven liberal arts of the Middle Ages, the Trivium and Quadrivium that have so often been mentioned, and with much the same extension of meaning for some of the subjects that have been described in preceding pages. It is well to observe, however, that grammar, in which formal grammar was emphasized, hardly included anything that could be called literature, the authors of classical antiquity that had retained some feeble hold on the monastic schools of the preceding period being now neglected;* and that dialectics, or the art of dis-

* Denifé, *Die Universitäten des Mittelalters*, p. 758 and note, also Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, Vol 1, pp 65-72 for the school of Chartres and its use of classics, with the causes that Scholasticism then overwhelmed Humanism

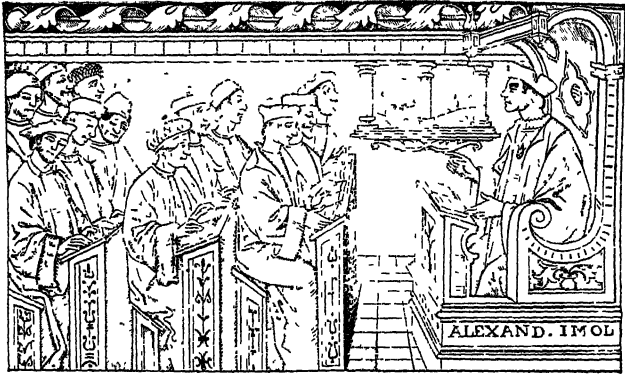
putation, was the preponderating subject, with the works of Aristotle on dialectics and ethics, that had then been translated in an imperfect form, as the supreme authorities.

The student in arts received first the degree of bachelor and some years later that of master, the two degrees requiring at Oxford about seven years. It needs hardly to be said that the instruction in arts, as well as in the sciences now to be mentioned, was given entirely in Latin. If for no other reason, this would have been imperative with students coming from many different countries and speaking many different dialects; though it is probable that students, as a rule, attached themselves to masters who were their countrymen.

Since the arts studies were the usual preparation for the professional branches, this art faculty was counted in Oxford and Paris as inferior in rank.* The numbers in arts naturally exceeded those in all the higher faculties combined.

Of the sciences, theology with its handmaid philosophy was usually considered chief. This required of the student, already a master of arts, seven or eight years of study and the acquisition of skill in disputing and preaching. Its sole studies seem to have been the Bible, and the four books of "Sentences" of Peter the Lombard, a famous doctor in Paris in the 12th century, whose "Sentences" were long the authoritative textbook of Theology. To these the "*Summa*" of Thomas Aquinas, a 13th century theologian, was in some cases added. When the candidate for the master's degree

* Denifle, p 98, and Lyte Op. cit. p. 53.



LECTURE ON CIVIL LAW BY GUILLAUME BENEDICTI (After
a 16th century wood-engraving in the National library,
Paris, reproduced in Cubberley's Syllabus)

had mastered the Bible and the Sentences, "he must still practise himself three years at the university in disputing and preaching, and must also be present at disputations."* The course was evidently a long one, but from the modern point of view its length was more than equalled by its dry formality and its emptiness.

In civil and common law, the subjects were the compilations and collections of the Roman law that had been handed down from the time of Justinian, and the papal Decretals, with comments and expositions thereupon from the doctors, and with abundant disputation, in a course of eight or even ten years, after which and the passing of examinations, in which disputation played a large part, the student became a licentiate and doctor *utriusque legis*. Roger Bacon complains that in his day, civil law had too great attention in the English universities.

The professional education in medicine consisted of a preliminary course of two or three years in an elementary work, some book on practice, and certain parts of the medical writings of Avicenna, a celebrated Arabian writer on medicine and philosophy of the 10th and 11th century who had made a more than usually systematic statement of Greek medical ideas, and whose works had been translated into Latin. This preliminary course, which admitted to the baccalaureate, was followed by five or six years study, chiefly of Galen and Hippocrates, preparatory to the doctorate.

Thus the medical course was of seven or nine years,

* See von Raumer, *Gesch. der Pad.* Vol IV, p 20, etc. For the requirements in sciences in England see Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge from the Earliest Time*, pp 383-5, also Lyte, *History of the University of Oxford*, p 219-223 for all the faculties including theology

according as the student was or was not a graduate in arts. In Cambridge the student must be a master in arts, and must have attended lectures on prescribed authors at least five years, and have had two years practice for the doctorate. Disputations were also obligatory even here, but clinics and anatomical demonstrations are not mentioned, unless they are included in English universities under the term "*in practica*". In the 12th and 13th centuries, the University of Montpellier had an overshadowing reputation as a school of medicine.

Possibly this summary of mediæval professional studies may justify the dissent that has been expressed from the opinion that the weight of traditional learning in the several sciences had of itself forced specialization. The surprise that will doubtless be caused by a comparison of length of the courses with the brevity of the subject-matter, will be lessened when we observe the method of teaching and learning which then prevailed, which in a great measure was made necessary by circumstances, and which in itself was a controlling cause of specialization, since a single life would hardly suffice for more than one specialty.

(2) We must at the outset, in justice to these ancient nurseries of learning, recall to mind the fact that printing had not yet been invented, and that in consequence books of every kind were scarce and very dear, since they could be multiplied only by the tedious process of transcribing. Likewise works of literary merit were so little known that the famous library of Paris in 1300 A. D. had copies only of Cicero, Ovid, Boethius, and Lucan. Near the close of the 15th cen-

tury, the library of the Medici in Florence had less than 1,000 manuscripts, and the Vatican library only about 5,000, nearly all collected with vast labor and expense after a new spirit had begun to agitate the turbid depths of mediæval ideas. Moreover, the human intellect, though now aroused to a remarkable activity, was still far from emancipating itself from the habit of a servile deference to authority in science as well as in religion.

From these causes, the methods of instruction that came to be devised were dictation from manuscripts of prescribed subject matter which students were to copy and memorize, and dialectic disputations on these by students and teachers as a mental gymnastic, to which was added a third expedient soon to be mentioned. With regard to the first, we may quote a lively descriptive paragraph from Karl Schmidt,* which, though more exactly applicable to the last two centuries of the Middle Ages, when some degeneracy had possibly crept into the teaching of the universities, may yet by the subtraction of a little coloring be considered fairly descriptive of the dictation method in general.

“ According to the expression then in vogue, the professor read a book and the student listened to a book. To lessen labor they hit upon the idea of presenting abstracts, the so-called summaries (*summen*), which soon entirely supplanted the original works. Into the narrow frame of the explanation of these few books must be crowded everything worth knowing, an artificial process which led to all sorts of subtleties and strange interpretations. Hence it may have been advis-

* Geschichte der Pädagogik. Vol. II, pp 366-7.

able to demand dictation. Therefore the statutes of the university of Vienna required of every reader 'that he should dictate honestly and exactly, slowly and distinctly, so indicating the paragraphs, capitals, commas, etc., as the sense demands, as to lighten the labor of copying.' In this dictation the students were often miserably swindled. The dishonest master made use of unknown writings containing many errors, or of pretended works of honored masters in order to attract more copyists, and also dictated recently-penned books of foreign scholars. The students were not to be outdone in tricks. In Italy many young men made use of the dictated manuscripts of others, studied at home, and so saved the fees; the nobles sent their servants into the college to copy; and there was yet lacking only that the dictating teachers should likewise send their servants to the reading desk."

In all this it will be seen that there is no thought on the side of the professors of presenting the results of original research or independent thought. All is exposition based on authority, and the older the authority the better. It was rank heresy or presumption, for example, to question the authority of Aristotle; and it is related of an old professor that when a student called his attention to the rumor that spots had been seen on the sun, he replied, "There can be no spots for I have read Aristotle twice from beginning to end, and he says the sun is incorruptible;" so, with an injunction to wipe his glasses that he might see more clearly, the doubting student was dismissed.

For the students, on the other hand, there is no place for the use of reason; they are merely to copy what

is given and to cram it up for a distant examination or for use as indisputable arguments in future verbal conflicts. Such was the dictation method that was in vogue in the mediæval universities, its essence authority and receptivity.

In the correlative disputation, on the other hand, there was real movement of mind, but it was movement in no determined direction, stir without change of place, to mark time but not to advance. These disputations, which were shared by both teachers and students, might have been a useful expedient in the lack of books for bringing to notice new ideas that had been originated by any one, thus serving as a medium of publication; or for defending received opinions against unwarranted novelties; or for impressing strongly what had been learned, by its use in lively discussion; but they soon degenerated into hair-splitting distinctions, into verbal duels in which the principal fought for victory rather than truth, and "made a merit of being able to prove the most opposite things with equal facility" from the same premises, or "of disputing several successive days about nothing with the greatest dialectic skill".

Empty though they were, these verbal battles, we are told, were waged with such vigor and heat that it was found necessary to separate the contestants by barriers to prevent them from coming to blows. Yet however much they may have fostered intellectual acuteness and mental dexterity, as they doubtless did, they were very far from encouraging freedom of thought; for though the disputants might explain away and thus minimize the force of received ideas, or might

question their application to the case in hand, they might not cast doubt upon their authority in general.

Hence resulted, in the words of von Raumer, "that dialectics, not merely in the philosophic faculty, but in all faculties of all universities, ruled so overmasteringly that everywhere the interest in the essential import, the essential truth, and the essential cultivation of the scientific subjects that were taught, sunk out of sight, and men were completely satisfied with a mere formal dialectical truth."*

Such then was the scholastic method, a subtle use of the machinery of formal logic, which, at first applied to the philosophic questions of theology in attempts to support the doctrines of the church and to reconcile dogma with reason, spread soon to all the subjects of the university, and infected the methods of all classes of schools during the later centuries of the Middle Ages.

Thus we read of the three chief schools of London later in the 12th century: "When the feast of the patron saint is solemnized, the masters convene their scholars. The youth on that occasion dispute, some in the demonstrative way, and some logically. These produce their enthymemes and those the more perfect syllogisms. Some, the better to show their parts, are exercised in disputation contending with one another, whilst others are put upon establishing some truth by way of illustration. Some sophists endeavor to apply on feigned topics a vast heap and flow of words, others to impose upon you with false conclusions * * * The boys of different schools wrangle with one another

* Geschichte der Pädagogik, Vol. IV, p. 27.

in verse, contending about the principles of grammar or the rules of the perfect tenses and supines.”*

This quotation has been introduced as well to illustrate the scholastic method, as to show how quickly the scholastic spirit had invaded the lower schools in those times. Based on unquestioned authority, and with no resort to individual experience or personal observation, using mere formal processes for merely formal ends, and barren of all results in the advancement of the sciences it nominally cultivated, the best thing that can be said of it from our point of view is, that by unsettling men's convictions as to what is truth, or whether there is any truth other than a mere formal logical truth, it led finally to a doubt of authority, produced men like William of Occam, tended to the spread of heresies which now began to spring up, and finally opened the way to the genuine spirit of inquiry which marked the great Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries.

Yet when we consider the circumstances of that age, the means of culture then available, and the nature of the questions that then profoundly exercised the newly-awakened intellectual activity of men, our opinion of the scholastic methods is likely to be considerably modified. It is not wholly sure that they were not well adapted for the times in which they prevailed: indeed the natural presumption would be quite the contrary. It is certain that in that age they were universally esteemed the fittest preparation for the conditions of life that then prevailed; and hence

* Education in Early England, p. 54, in publications of Early English Texts Soc.

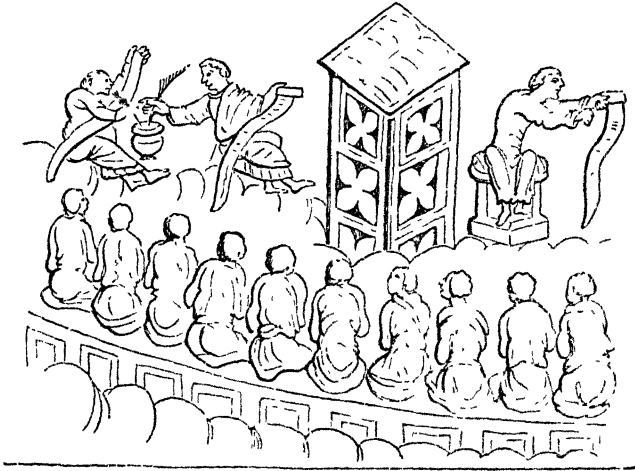
if we find in them little or nothing that would be valuable to us, it would not be quite just for us, measuring them by our standards, to condemn them as absurd. It is not wholly sure that future ages may not visit a like judgment on some of our favorite means.

In this regard the words of Mullinger are worthy of our consideration.*

“ Their earnestness and devotion invest with a certain dignity even their obscure and errant metaphysics, their interminable logic, their artificial theology, and their purely hypothetical science; and if we reflect that it is far from improbable that in some future era the studies now predominant at Oxford and Cambridge may seem for the greater part as much examples of misplaced energy as those to which we look back with such pitying contempt, we shall perhaps arrive at the conclusion that the centuries bring us no nearer to absolute truth, and that it is pursuit rather than the prize, the subjective discipline rather than the objective gain, which gives to all culture its chief meaning and worth.”

A third expedient for assuming the mastery of the subjects taught remains to be mentioned, and it was wholly admirable. In all the facilities of at least some of the universities, the bachelors were required to alternate their higher work by lecturing to those less advanced on books that they had themselves. They learned by teaching; and as Mullinger remarks, “ the duties of the lecture-room and the disputations of the schools enabled all to test their powers and weigh their chances of practical success long before the period of

*The History of Cambridge from the Earliest Times, p 136, Vol. I.



INTERIOR OF A NORMAN SCHOOL, 12th CENTURY. (From Cuthbertus
Syllabus, after a cut in Wright's Homes of Other Days. The teacher
on the right is lecturing, with two writers on the left.)

preparation had expired." The admission of the bachelor to the right and duty to give certain lectures and to preside over disputations was called inception or commencing, since he was now to begin to teach as well as to learn.

For the master, inception was a very imposing ceremony, ending with his receiving the insignia of his rank, being saluted as *noster magister*, and being empowered to teach in any university. In some universities, if not in all, the master was required, if called on, to give ordinary lectures in his alma mater for at least a year; thus the right of teaching was also a duty which might be imposed. It is hardly necessary to remark that inception is the origin of our modern commencement, though the significance that commencing conveyed to a mediæval student has been greatly modified in later times.

Both Lyte and Mullinger speak of the heavy cost of "inception", and of taking any of the higher degrees. The former says p. 225: "The cost of taking a degree in theology, or indeed in any of the superior faculties, was very heavy. Members of the religious orders, having no private property, were therefore unable to become doctors without the aid of a grant from their brethren assembled in chapter. In 1400, the convent of Christ Church, Canterbury, paid no less than £118 3s. 8d. for the inception of two Benedictine monks, in theology and in canon law respectively. The money was spent, partly, in the entertainment of the regent masters, and other members of the university." When it is considered that at this time the purchase power of money was at least twelve times as great as

at present, and that sons of wealthy families could be respectably maintained at Oxford for not more than £10 per year, it will be apparent how grossly exorbitant were such expenses.

(3) In giving an account of the condition of morals in the early universities, von Raumer judiciously reminds us by an apt quotation, that while the evil deeds of the vicious and reckless make a prominent figure in the records of the times, from being the subjects of warnings and punishments, the quiet virtues of the well-ordered and studious majority who grow up to be the pride and ornament of their age are unrecorded, and so are likely to be left out of the account when we make up our estimate of the general character of these ancient institutions. With this caution he cites for us those pages in the statutes of the universities of Paris and Vienna, taken as typical, which concern the morals of students and professors, remembering that what is prohibited has quite probably occurred in the universities.*

In Paris such vices are denounced as thieving, house-breaking, abduction of girls, and assassination, besides some crimes too shameful to admit of mention. A papal bull of 1276 denounces excommunication against those Paris students who were guilty of various forms of sacrilege.

The statutes of Vienna are not aimed at such glaring crimes as are those of Paris, a fact which possibly bespeaks some amelioration of manners during the centuries which elapsed between the rise of the Uni-

* Geschichte der Pädagogik, Vol. IV, p. 23. Barnard's Journal of Education, vi 10; vii. 47, 80, 200.

versity of Paris and the foundation of that of Vienna; still *theological* students in Vienna are warned not to be drunkards and debauchees; students of law are enjoined to be quiet at lectures, not to shout, yell and hiss, and to avoid the company of infamous persons, brawlers and gamblers; and the students in general are naively bidden "not to spend more time in tippling places, in fights, and in guitar-playing than they devote to physics, logic, and college studies." Expulsion is denounced against such students as *after warning* are guilty of drunkenness, thieving, gambling, insulting citizens, and making night hideous with student songs, and especially against such as break in doors.

Evidently therefore the state of morals and manners among the uneasy spirits in these old universities was not an ideal one, not better than that of the ages in which such offences occurred. I do not mention such ordinary matters as riotous collisions between "town and gown", which, from the common practice of carrying weapons, frequently ended in bloodshed.

In Paris and Oxford where many of the students were still very young, the collection of the students, which was somewhat early begun, into halls and endowed colleges where they lived under some oversight, did much to correct some of the worst disorders. In imitation of Paris, some of the older German universities established what were called Burses, or authorized lodging houses, where the students were placed under the charge of a rector who was to exercise a strict oversight over them and to aid them in their studies. But the rectors, to entice students to their houses,

winked at their vices or even shared them, retailed beer to them at a large profit, and grew rich by the neglect of their duties.* These Burses, having no endowments, have long since disappeared, leaving no trace of their former existence save the term *Bursche* applied to university students. Not so the endowed colleges of Paris and the English universities, which came in time to overshadow the universities of which they were members.

In Paris we are told that besides the punishments inflicted by the university in its municipal capacity, flogging was commonly resorted to even so late as the 15th century, bachelors as well as under-graduates in arts being thrashed for their offences.

It is interesting to note in this connection that in Bologna, where the students were older and were themselves the governing body, a much better condition of morals and manners seems to have prevailed.

Yet coarse and even shocking as much that is reported seems to our modern idea, it is quite probable that as a whole it stands in much the same relation to the general tone and standard of life and conduct of the period in which it was true of the universities, as student pranks in other ages stand to the morals and manners of their times. It always has been true and possibly always will be true, that young fellows just released from home restraints and enjoying their first taste of complete freedom and self-direction, have displayed a certain amount of exuberance and extravagance of spirit, extravagance because it overleaps to some extent the general standard of conduct of the

* von Raumer, *Op. cit.*, Vol. IV., p. 28.

age, but always doubtless has reference to it even while transgressing it.

If therefore the conduct of mediæval students seems to us coarse and rude even to the point of repulsiveness, it was because the times were still marked by the same characteristics though in a somewhat less degree. If the college-boy of to-day no longer carries weapons, nor engages in bloody broils, nor breaks into houses, nor thieves nor gambles nor abducts, this fact is due not so much to any change in youthful human nature, as to the enormous advances in civilization and refinement which the latest centuries have brought in their train.

(4) Besides their direct and intended influence in promoting a certain style of learning which probably was suited to the times and made use of the best means that were then available, and which thus by its conformity to the state and means of culture did much to prepare for a better future culture, the universities indirectly and without conscious intention did important services as a civilizing and educative agency. Let us here briefly indicate some of these incidental services.

(a) They brought young men from widely distant countries, marked by the greatest diversities in modes of living and thinking, into the most intimate relations, at an age in which the most vivid of lasting impressions are made. From this association they not only gained some ideas of European geography and history which were then but very little known, but also by their intercourse wore away much of their provincialism of manners and feeling; they came to

recognize with the ready instinct of youth the points of superiority, each of the other; and thus what ever of strength and refinement then existed anywhere came to be blended into a European type of character. This was ultimately borne by every student to his own home, where he became a centre of influence to his fellows.

The importance of this fact can hardly be overestimated; nor can that of a fact closely allied to it, viz., the counteraction that the freedom of travel and the protection guaranteed to students and their servants wrought against what still survived of the isolating spirit of feudalism. With the guarantee of safety of travel to those who were in that age the most efficient agents for the spread of whatever civilizing ideas then existed, it cannot be doubted that the most harmful feature of feudalism, its isolating tendency, already undermined by the Crusades, was doomed to speedy extinction.

(b) The universities taught the lesson, greatly needed in that rude age, of the supremacy of human reason over mere brute force. In this they became the efficient coadjutors of the church, which had long been the sole power that enforced respect without resort to armed violence.

The spiritual power of the church, however, was reinforced by supernatural and superstitious terrors. This new power had no such adventitious aids. It gained its influence by the mere superiority which trained intellect has over brute force, through sagacity, through foresight, through command of resources in unlooked for exigencies. By such qualities the nurse-

lings of the universities, trained though they were under an imperfect system, yet *trained*, gradually attained a supremacy which supplanted the reign of violence and gave a vast impulse to European civilization.

(c) Furthermore the universities promoted and shaped general education through that pervasive influence which higher centres of learning inevitably exert upon all lower schools. For they not only furnished teachers for such schools and supplied them with their intellectual equipment, but also by reason of whatever standard of attainment they set up, they directed the minds of both teachers and pupils to the mark which they should strive to reach. Thus we have seen already how soon the scholastic methods of the universities had made their way into the schools of London, so that the sons of teachers and craftsmen strove to fit themselves for the probable pursuit of their fathers' callings by gaining dexterity in subtle argumentation. To this may be added that the requirements for entering on university work made it necessary that whatever lower schools existed should fit their pupils to meet these requirements, and thus gave an indirect but powerful impulse towards something higher even to these pupils who had no intention to enter the university.

We have seen also in the case of Guibert de Nogent how great difficulty was experienced in the age immediately preceding the rise of universities in finding teachers fitted for even the humblest kind of teaching. By supplying this want the universities doubtless gave a very considerable impulse to the estab-

lishment of schools, and thus to the spread of education; whilst the rapid multiplication of universities already mentioned testifies eloquently to the spread of intelligence, and to the growth of desires which could be satisfied only by a considerable increase in the number of local schools. The high estimate that was placed on the *licencia docendi* conferred by the university, probably the sole degree for two centuries, shows clearly the direction in which university instruction was tending; and though, as we shall presently see, elementary schools seem to have been somewhat tardy in their growth, there was doubtless a vast increase in family education through private tutorships.

(d) The last of the indirect benefits conferred by the universities was certainly wholly unintentional, since while emphasizing authority and servilely deferring to it, they yet, by their dialectic disputations, trained men to doubt everything, authority included, and thus paved the way unwittingly for that spirit of free inquiry which has done so much in the past few centuries for every department of knowledge.

To this may be added that it is by no means unlikely that the organized self-government which characterized the ancient universities, whether in its more democratic form as in Bologna, where the student associations were the source of authority, or in the more aristocratic form which it assumed in Paris under the sway of the regent masters, coöperated with the example of the guilds in generating in men's minds, slowly but surely, more democratic ideas and truer conceptions of the rightful source of governmental authority.

This brief account of the services of the mediæval

universities could not be more truthfully concluded than by quoting a sentence from Deniflé.* “The Middle Ages need, in truth, no excuse for not having accomplished everything, since perfection even to-day after six or seven centuries has not been reached. Just at the present time we are involved in manifold doubt as to the best way to set about reforming our higher institutions of learning; although we should soon reach greater certainty by the adoption of a principle which the Middle Ages instinctively applied, but which in later times has alas! been too often neglected, viz., that the new should rest upon the old, and that the old should remain living in the new.”

(5) Our final topic in treating of the mediæval universities relates to the changes wrought in them by the invention of printing, the introduction and cheapening of linen paper, and the revival of interest in classical literature. These facts which, occurring in the 15th century, brought to an end the mediæval period, revolutionized the subject-matter and methods of the universities, though not without a vigorous struggle, and deeply affected their very organization.

It would be difficult for us fully to conceive how profound was the change produced by the invention of printing and by the introduction of linen paper into common use which took place at nearly the same time.† Heretofore, not only had transcription been

* Die Univ. des Mittelalters, p. 798.

† Hallam's Middle Ages, C. IX, Pt 2d, and Hattenbach, Das Schriftwesen des Mittelalters, p. 114-123, both indicate that though paper was known from Arabian sources as early as the 12th century, it was little used till the 15th. See Quentin Durward, C. X. 111 for vivid statement of effect of printing.

slow and costly, but the material on which to write was also costly, both causes preventing a rapid multiplication of books. Henceforth all this was changed, in many ways.

Most obviously, it made no longer indispensable the tedious work of dictation and copying with subsequent memorizing. As the professors might no longer dictate from works that would be in every hand, they were remitted to the necessity, if they read at all, of doing some work which bore the stamp of their own personality, and of submitting it to the test of a ready comparison with the works of honored authors. Thus professors were stimulated to work as they had never been before. They dictated indeed, and in some cases have continued to do so down to the present century, but it has been from work which they have done themselves.

However, the old subtle hair-splitting habits long remained and led to what has been called "the academic art of spinning". As an example of this we are told of a professor in Vienna that "he lectured twenty-two years on the first chapter of Isaiah, and was surprised by death before he was done."

On the part of students, the release from copying and to some extent from memorizing, both gave more opportunity for the use of the higher powers of the intellect, and greatly lessened the time needed for acquiring knowledge.

We have already seen how long was the time and how meagre the knowledge under the old regime. Furthermore, access to books made it no longer necessary for students to undertake long journeys, that they

might hear the words of famous masters from their own lips. Through the medium of print they might enjoy the wisdom of such masters at home and be spared the vexations and expense of travel. This fact doubtless had a tendency to diminish somewhat the numbers that flocked to special universities, or at least to make their clientage more largely local.

A further consequence was, that under the new order of things introduced by printing fewer professors were required than before. This had a double effect; for the students it meant diminished fees; for the universities, a more select teaching force by the retention of only the more highly gifted and learned masters whilst the less efficient were dispensed with. That the multiplication of masters who were often of very inferior character, and the consequent increased expense of students, had grown to be great evils in the mediæval universities, and that these evils were slow in yielding to the new order of things, may be clearly seen in the "*Advertissemens au Roy*" of the famous Ramus in 1562 with regard to the university of Paris.*

Such were the more obvious effects produced on the universities by the invention of printing in the 15th century. It may readily be seen that they were important in a high degree, affecting their methods of teaching and their efficiency, the expenses of instruction and its breadth of influence.

The revival of interest in classical literature and its growing use in instruction wrought changes in all classes of schools quite as weighty as those that have

* Waddington, *Vie de Ramus*, pp 141 and 409.

just been mentioned,—changes in the subject-matter of arts studies in all schools, universities included; still further changes in method by the abolition or the lessening of scholastic disputation; changes also in parts of the organization of many universities, especially those in Germany.

With the general subject of the struggle of classicism for supremacy in education and its final triumph, we have nothing to do just now; since for the sake of clearness and orderliness of view as to the sequence of events it is essential that we should limit ourselves strictly to that which belongs to the period antecedent to 1500 A. D. But the revival of interest in Greek and Roman literature which began in Italy in the time of Petrarch took on great proportions during the 15th century; what it was likely to do for the universities began now to be seen, and it is fitting here to state briefly its obvious tendencies.

It would obviously arouse a virulent but futile opposition. It would revolutionize the arts studies by driving out scholasticism as empty and outworn, and by the introduction of the literature of classical antiquity in place of the barbarous Latin and monkish homilies of the Middle Ages. It would complete the revolution in method, by installing real observation and reasoning based thereon in the place of hair-splitting definitions and distinctions, and by substituting for barren disputation with its mechanical readiness in the use of words and empty abstractions, a truly developing exposition of the best products of human genius. By the disuse of disputation with its need of incessant practice it would make no longer necessary

for this purpose the associated life of colleges and burses, thus slowly effecting changes in the organization of universities in which these were unendowed. The fulness of these momentous changes belongs to a later period, but its beginnings may now be seen, and hence have been mentioned in concluding our review of the early universities.

CHAPTER VII

CLOSE OF MEDIEVAL EDUCATION

The schools other than the universities during the four centuries that we have under review will need no very extended description. Indeed Compayré says in his *History of Pedagogy* that, "save claustral and cathedral schools, to which must be added some parish schools, the earliest examples of our village schools, the sole educational establishment of the Middle Ages was what is called the university."

This statement, which may be correct as regards France, though even there the parish schools were so numerous that in 1380 there were 63 teachers of this class in Paris alone, is somewhat too sweeping when applied to Germany, the Low Countries, and England.

Equally too favorable a view is conveyed by a statement attributed to Roger Bacon, "that there had never been so great an appearance of learning and so general an application to study in so many different faculties as in this time (the 13th century), when schools were erected in every city, town, burgh, and castle."

There can indeed be little doubt that in England, during the last centuries of the Middle Ages, larger provisions were made for the education of the wealthier classes than elsewhere, not only in the monastic and cathedral schools, but also by private schools and

tutors, by city schools, and the endowed grammar schools, of which at least thirty antedate 1500, including such still famous schools as Eton and Winchester; yet all this would hardly warrant such breadth of statement as is attributed to Bacon.

In Germany and Switzerland the old monastic schools seem to have fallen largely into decay. The Benedictine cloisters had so greatly declined that, even in St. Gall, which had earlier been famous as a seat of learning, but a single monk could be found in 1291 who could read and write.*

The cathedral schools also declined for a time, but in the 13th century there was in them a marked revival of interest, old schools were improved, and many new ones were founded under church auspices in the more important cities, devoted however almost solely to the education of the clergy and of such sons of nobles as rose above the contempt of learning that prevailed in this class; such scanty instruction as was vouchsafed in them to poor children was confined to the church catechism.

As has earlier been said, city organizations sprang up later in Germany than in Italy and France; but when they did arise, the growing industries of the cities soon made apparent to the more opulent class the need of a culture suited to their wants, a practical education adapted to fit men for their worldly duties as artisans and citizens.

Hence during the 13th and 14th centuries, many schools were founded by the magistracy of nearly all cities, in which were taught reading, writing, reckon-

* Dittes, *Schule der Pädagogik*, Pt. 4, § 20.

ing, and some elements of Latin. Such schools were sometimes called "writing schools". The clergy naturally claimed jurisdiction over these schools, and seem always to have maintained their rights of supervision; but in not a few instances the quarrels between clergy and magistrates which grew out of this claim were detrimental to the schools. Any instruction beyond the merest elements was still confined to the church; and in this, increasing numbers of sons of the wealthier citizens shared, impelled by the ambition to vie with the nobility.*

Outside of the cities, little seems to have been done even for the elementary religious instruction of the poorer classes during these centuries, so that the examination into the condition of the rural regions made by Melancthon and Luther early in the 16th century, reveals a deplorable ignorance which Luther depicts in his vigorous way.

In the Low Countries, the chapter schools which were converted later into municipal schools, and in which instruction in grammar, music, and morals was carried far enough to admit to the universities, together with some elementary schools, did valuable service in dispelling ignorance.

The most noteworthy service to general education in northern Europe, however, grew out of the efforts of Gerhard Groot (+1384) of Deventer in Holland. Born in easy circumstances, and highly educated in the lore of the times, he gained his master's degree at an early age and devoted himself for some years to an

* Specht, *Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in Deutschland bis 1250*, pp. 246-254.



ERASMUS, 1467-1536
See pages 168, 172



LUTHER, 1483-1546
See page 164



MELANCHTHON, 1497-1560
See page 164



THOMAS PLATTER, 1499-1582
See page 171



STURM, 1507-1589
See page 168



ASCHAM, 1516?-1568
See page 171

easy yet studious life. Possibly from the nature of his studies, he conceived a disgust for the emptiness of his life, became an ascetic, and preached with great effect in the vernacular until he was silenced by the hostility of the monks. Then he founded a peculiar society, the "Brotherhood of the Common Life", called also Hieronymians. The members of this society had all things in common and were bound by no irrevocable vows. They supported themselves by the labor of their own hands, mostly through the multiplication of books by transcription until the introduction of printing superseded this form of industry. They had an especial regard for religious culture, to further which they translated the Bible and the service books into the mother tongue that they might be brought to the understanding of the people. They were distinguished likewise for their dislike of scholastic subtleties.*

The order grew and its houses multiplied rapidly in the countries of northern Europe. The brothers devoted themselves with especial zeal to the instruction of the young. Schools were connected with all their houses, besides which they founded schools or taught in those already established. While laying special emphasis on religious teaching, they did not neglect literary culture, and when the new classical learning became known they were its effective advocates and its best teachers. Florentius Radewin (+1400) succeeded Groot, and Gerard of Zutphen aided Florentius working for translating the Scriptures to

* Von Raumer, *Gesch. der Päd.*, L. p. 54-60 and Schmidt, *Gesch. der Päd.* II, p. 329. *Barnard's Journal of Education*, iv. 652.

vernacular. Poor boys and girls were often objects of their special care and nurture. During the two centuries of their activity, they undoubtedly did much for the spread of learning in northern Europe. The most celebrated of those once their pupils were Thomas a Kempis, Rudolph Agricola, Erasmus and Sturm, the last three of whom became efficient promoters of the cause of classical learning, whilst the first is known to entire Christendom by his "Imitation of Christ".*

I have thus endeavored to give a concise sketch of the condition of European education, aside from the universities, during the closing centuries of the Middle Ages. It is obvious that, while not reaching very deep in point of generality, it yet extends somewhat widely and has in it a promise of better things to come. It is likewise obvious that it does not justify any sweeping assertions, either as to its lack or as to its universal diffusion.

Little need be added regarding the method that prevailed in these schools. Whatever of change is to be found from the methods of earlier ages, is in the direction of scholasticism, save among the brethren of Deventer. The principles if not the practices of scholasticism, and its paramount emphasis of authority, are to be seen everywhere. Dictation, which in the most favorable cases assumes somewhat the form of oral instruction, must necessarily prevail where books are few; pupils must copy from dictation; and, since they are to be expected to reproduce what

*A good account of this order may be found in Barnard's *American Journal of Education*, Vol. IV, p. 622, translated from von Raumer, *Geschichte der Pädagogik*, Vol. 1, pp. 51, etc.

has been given them, they are but too likely to memorize without any too anxious efforts to understand. Improvements in what seem to us tedious, ineffective, and time-wasting methods, must await the advent of books and the coming of that happier age when reform should be the order of the day, as in other things, so also in the subjects, the methods, and the spirit of the schools.

Aside from the universities, it is probable that few or no buildings dedicated solely to school purposes, were erected in Europe, until near the close of the Middle Ages. From the intimate connection of the schools with the church, they were naturally held in buildings devoted chiefly to religious uses, and which had little or no reference to the conveniences or comfort of school children. Possibly this remark may not apply to all of the English endowed grammar schools which originated in the 14th and 15th centuries, nor to some of the German city schools; yet the accounts that have been preserved of the equipment even of the universities, which the elementary schools could hardly be expected to excel, show how little regard was paid to comfort. School accommodations indeed smacked strongly of the asceticism in the midst of which Christian education had originated.

As were the school accommodations so were the school-masters of this period. With some honorable exceptions in the case of a few devoted parish priests, and among the Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the Brethren of Deventer, the ranks of elementary teachers were largely recruited, as they have too often been in later days, from the failures in other callings.

Many of them were engaged only for brief periods, were miserably but probably adequately paid for their inefficient services, and wandered from place to place seeking employment, a poor, despised, and too often immoral class.

Most prominent among these vagabond school-masters was a somewhat numerous class of wanderers called Vagants or Bacchants. This class had its origin in the privilege of safe conduct granted to the universities for their travelling students. This privilege, which was peculiarly liable to abuse by the idle and vicious, seems very early to have bred a set of tramps amongst men of some little university education but of depraved tastes, who used the name of travelling students to derive alms from the charitable, and more especially from the parish priests, whom they occasionally aided in teaching the children of the parish and in other duties. Claiming the privileges of clergy their lewd Latin songs and their discreditable conduct soon disgusted even the coarse age in which they lived. As early as the 13th century they had become so intolerable a nuisance that some bishops and abbots caused them to be met with cudgels instead of alms; and about the end of this century the church authorities forbade the parish clergy to aid the Goliards, as they were called at first, in any way, and denounced weighty penalties in case of disobedience.*

But though checked for a time by such vigorous measures, these vagabond scholars were by no means suppressed. They reappeared in the following centuries, known now as Vagants from their roving mode

* Specht, *Gesch. des Unterrichtswesens*, etc., pp. 198-201.

of life, and even more frequently as Bacchantes because of the vicious conviviality of their habits. They are not by any means exclusively wandering teachers seeking casual jobs at teaching and living off the country meanwhile, but lusty young fellows of coarsely roistering manners, who occasionally do some teaching between times, while visiting the schools of cities that offer abundant though coarse means of living to students.

They are attended by a number of wretched lads called "A. B. C. shooters", whose studies they nominally direct, but who are really their fags begging and even stealing for their brutal masters, and learning so little that one of them, Thomas Platter, who afterwards gained distinction, tells us that after nine years as an A. B. C. shooter, when he came into a school at Zurich, "I knew nothing, nor could I even read Donatus, and yet I was eighteen years of age; and I sat there like a hen among chickens."* If the pedagogical efforts of the Bacchantes when they were engaged as teachers were of the same character as their dealings with their fags, Platter's account gives us a lively picture of the character and success of the most numerous class of elementary teachers. After the end of the 15th century, nothing of this discreditable class survives but their name, which continued to be given to the new-comers in the German universities.

Whilst England does not seem to have been infested with these vagrant teachers, it is evident from a com-

* Von Raumer, *Op. Cit.* Vol 1, p 335, which is translated in *Barnard's American Journal*, Vol, 5, pp. 79-90; and *ibid* p. 608 is another account of the Bacchantes

plaint made by Roger Ascham in the 16th century that no greater care was there exercised in the choice of teachers. "It is pity," he says, "that commonly more care is had, yea and that amongst very wise men, to find out a cunning man for their horse, than a cunning man for their children. They say nay in word but they do so in deed. For the one they will gladly give a stipend of two hundred crowns by the year, and loth to offer to the other two hundred shillings. God that sitteth in heaven laugheth their choice to scorn, and rewardeth their liberality as it should; for he suffereth them to have tame and well-ordered horses, but wild and unfortunate children."*

As would naturally be expected, the discipline in the schools was everywhere severe and barbarous. The brutal treatment of the fags by the Bacchantis is depicted by Platter. Erasmus inveighs bitterly against the barbarity current in the schools of his day as defeating its object by creating a dislike for study, and he gives an example of it in his own case. More than a generation later Ascham testifies to the same effect that before he was fourteen years old "a fond schoolmaster drave him so with fear of beating from all love of learning" that he felt its effects even in his mature years. Compayré says: "the whip was in fashion in the 15th as in the 14th century. There was no other difference, says a historian, save that the whips of the 15th century were twice as long as in the 14th." What better could be looked for in the lower schools when the University of Paris still resorted to the rod even with its bachelors. The English practice in the

* The Schoolmaster, Arber's edition, p. 83.

treatment of pupils, and the punishments commonly resorted to, are quaintly illustrated in the following old English rhyme:

“ For all their noble bloode,
He plucks them by the hood
And shakes them by the eare,
And bryngs them in such feare:
He bayteth them lyke a beare,
Like an ox or a bul.
Their wittes he sayth are dul:
He sayth they have no brayne
Their estate to maintain:
And make to bowe the knee
Before his Majestie.”*

Such then were the schools and school-masters of the last four centuries of the Middle Ages; such were the narrow limits of their influence; such their studies their methods, and their discipline. It is not difficult however to see that there has been a perceptible advance over the two preceding centuries, at least in the numbers of those who receive some kind of schooling and in the facility of finding some kind of teachers. The instruction is no longer so largely confined to mere dogma; in the schools of the cities the studies are made to bear upon a better preparation for active life; the parish schools have evidently become more numerous, evincing greater earnestness in the religious training of the young; and I am inclined to think that, bad as a large part of the teachers may have been they were no worse morally than in the 10th and 11th

* Education in Early England, p. 7, in publications of the early English Text Soc.

centuries, and were considerably more learned as well as numerous.

Nor in this connection should be overlooked the humble yet devoted and meritorious services of many men of the new religious orders, and of some teachers of this period who were of a high type; like Guarino (+ 1460) and Vittorino da Feltre (+1446), both of whom were famous as teachers and became tutors of princes; both of whom distinguished themselves by zeal for better literature in instruction, and by their rejection of the prevailing scholastic methods as tending "to make boys twice as ignorant and silly" as they had been before; whilst Guarino also inspired by his teaching at least five English scholars who later rose to distinction.*

Likewise the "gentle Gerson" ought not to be forgotten as a promoter of the education of the masses, who, rising from a humble station to be chancellor of the University of Paris, distinguished himself in his high station by "his sympathy for the disinherited ones of this world", and by writing small elementary treatises for the common people in their mother tongue.†

If now we add to this the work of the universities, about fifty in number, that were established during these four centuries, and consider the great numbers of men that they reached and the wide extent of their influence, it will easily be seen how vast has been the educational progress made in this period.

It is well for us thus to take considerate account of

* Lyte, *History of Oxford University*. C. XIV, p. 393.

† Compayré, p. 76.

the state of education at this time, for with the close of the 15th century we reach the end of the old order of things, and approach the era of that tremendous intellectual as well as religious revolution called the Great Renaissance, whose inciting causes we have already observed in the invention of printing, rendering intellectual intercourse easier, and in the revival of interest in classical literature; to which may be added a profound religious unrest, and an intellectual expectancy springing from great geographical discoveries.

Nor were the conditions lacking which would favor a swift advance in education as well as civilization. For, during the period that was ending, the political administration of most of the European states had assumed a more settled form with the decline of feudalism and the consequent strengthening of the powers of the central governments, thus assuring that measure of order and legal security so essential to the progress of learning; to which was added the need that began to be felt in the diplomatic intercourse of states of a kind of knowledge hitherto neglected, which urgently prompted men to new forms of culture and became a powerful influence for enlightenment.*

Thus with these powerful incitements to a new and better learning and under such more favorable conditions for its cultivation the Middle Ages ended and the new era was ushered in.

* Guizot, History of Civilization in Europe, Lecture XI.

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