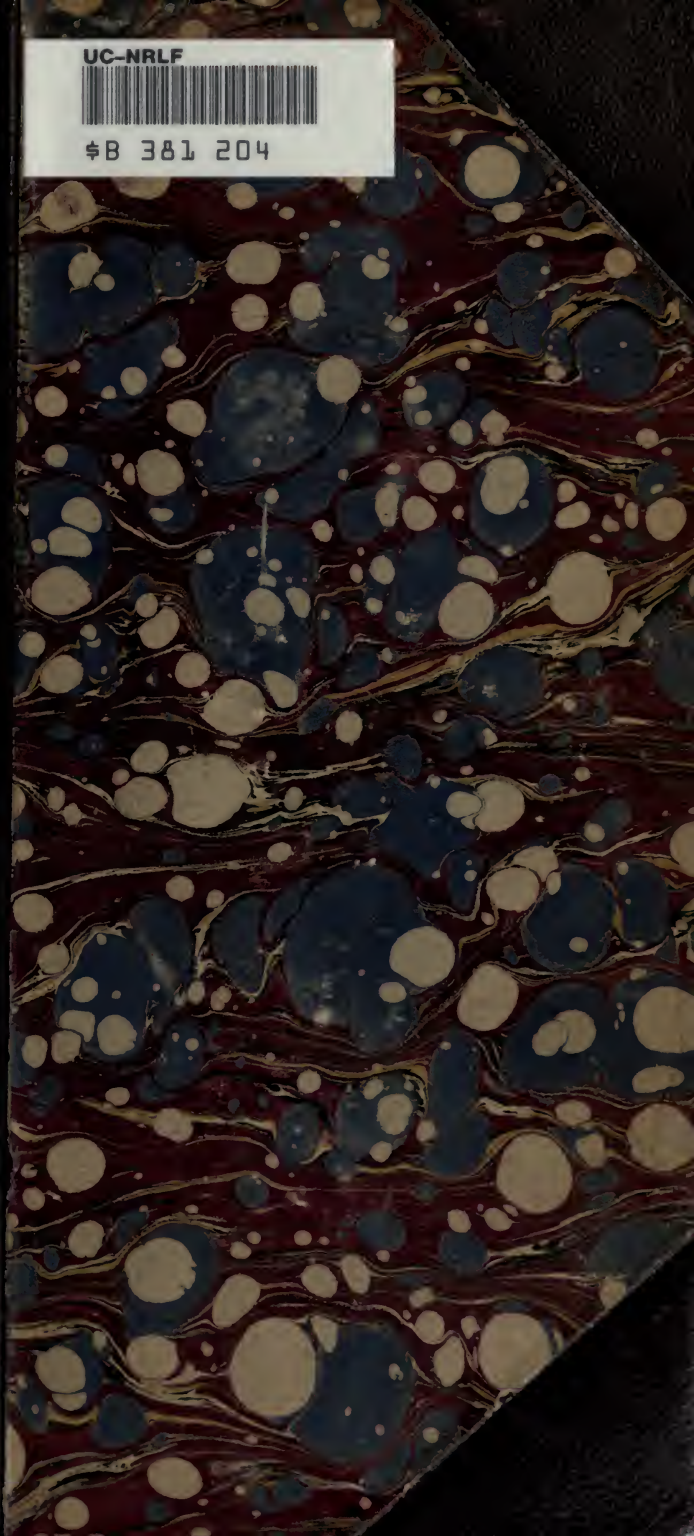


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NOTES OF FOUR LECTURES

ON



THE LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

OF

THE MIDDLE AGES



DELIVERED IN EDINBURGH

BY A. J. SCOTT

OF OWENS COLLEGE, MANCHESTER.

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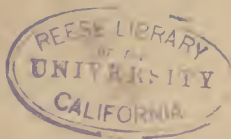
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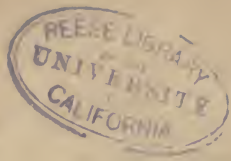
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NOTE.

It is much to be regretted that the idea of employing a skilled reporter to take down Mr. Scott's Lectures did not occur to his friends till after the first had been delivered, which is consequently very inadequately supplied from the recollections of one of the hearers.



LECTURE I.

You are aware that I have undertaken on this occasion to give a brief series of illustrations of the history of the Literature of the Middle Ages. I am glad that my Lectures have been preceded by those of Dr. Kinkel on Mediæval Art, and those of Dr. Brewer on the Norman Conquest; for, although the period comprised in Dr. Brewer's Lecture is comparatively a very limited one, we shall find in this portion of our own history characteristics exhibiting in miniature a process which ultimately extended itself over the whole of North-Western Europe. And art is, in truth, the grand characteristic feature of the Mediæval period. The characteristics of the old Roman civilisation are very varied. We read of the armies of Rome, of its poetry, its history, its palaces, its jurisprudence. Of the Gothic period its art is almost all we know. The Norman castle, the Gothic cathedral, rise up before us as almost the only images associated with this time in our minds,—as that which alone gives any distinctness to our conceptions of a form of life so wonderfully different from that in which we exist.

In the brief course of four Lectures, I can attempt little more than to illustrate the subject by some very

general ideas. You will not expect that I should enter with you on any course of instruction. If we think of the space which this period occupies in the works of our great historic writers, Sismondi, Hallam, &c. &c., any such attempt must be felt to be impossible. Am I then to give a mere abridgment of what they have written?—to put before you a dry chronological succession of events? This would, on my part, be but labour thrown away; it would not avail to you for either instruction or amusement: I utterly renounce the thought of doing either. All that I can hope for is, to put before you some general view of the relations that exist between the political bearings of this time and its literature; to give some attractiveness to the subject to those hitherto ignorant of it; while to those who have already studied it, an opportunity may be afforded of comparing notes with me, and seeing how far our views and sympathies on the subject are at one.

The Middle Ages! What portion of the history of our race is to be comprised within this term? The classic period which goes before them lies all in light. With the glories of Athens we are all more or less familiar. Rome is before us with its early republic—the heroism of its citizens—the military grandeur of the later republic—the gorgeous decay of its empire—many great and glorious names are familiar to us all. After going through a long subterraneous passage, we enter upon another period, our impressions of which are again distinct and living. Chaucer and Dante are names as familiar to us as are those of Homer and Æschylus. Then comes on like the dawn the still more recent time of Elizabeth, of Shakspeare

and Spenser and Milton, landing us at last in the actual world in which we find ourselves. But of the long intervening period between the classic age and that dawn which we have indicated—of the successive changes of thought which have made us what we are—how little do we know! In these, to us, dark ages, the transition was made which has issued in modern civilisation. *Ages*, I say, not *age*, for we must remember a thousand years are comprehended in the period so called. Compared with this the classic period is brief indeed! And how vast and varied have been the changes! New nations, new languages, have been created; forms of thought wholly different from those of the old world have come into being. What, indeed, has not changed!

The great Roman historians—Livy, Tacitus, Suetonius, among others—give us a vivid picture of the first centuries after the Christian era. Then, although the north-west of Europe was coming into notice, and gradually assuming more importance, there was but one language and one civilisation. Whatever was not of Rome, was not civilized. Men of letters found in Rome their common home. There might be risings up against the central authority, attempts in various parts of the empire to set up independent emperors—still all was *Roman*. Britain furnishes soldiers, ventures even, in the person of Carausius, to have an emperor of its own—still it remained *Roman*; Rome was everything, especially in literature. This was the state of things at the close of the first great period. How was it two or three centuries after, when we begin to emerge from that dark subterranean passage of which I spoke? Italy has now a

new language ; it was *one*, it is now divided into a multiplicity of new republics ; two powers wholly new appear darkly brooding over society—one calls itself Roman still, but what natural relation exists between such emperors as Otho or Henry IV. and Augustus or Vespasian ?

Instead of one vast centre of authority there are many ; Germany alone has many, France has one, England one. A new order of things is arising ; we become conscious that we are entering the world in which we now live. The old world seems to have passed away, our own is in existence, as different from that old one as to Columbus was the world he had discovered from that which he had left behind. It is curious to attempt to trace how the change has taken place. Has that old world really passed wholly away ? Has our own modern world no relation to it ? Have the forces in operation been like those of a volcano violently displacing previous relations ; or has there been rather a process of development during which the new has grown out of the old ? When we hear the former asserted, we may well suspect the soundness of the assertion. I believe we shall find there have been fewer violent inexplicable revolutions in the world than men imagine. A great deal may be done without violence in a thousand years.

I shall not attempt to say what all the forces were which combined to bring about the change. Two I must mention as essential to it. But first let us fix precisely what period we are to understand as forming the dark ages. The limits have been fixed variously and very arbitrarily. Beginning from the

fall of the Western Empire under Arcadius and Honorius in the fifth century, they have by some been conceived as ending with the invention of printing in the fourteenth century ; by others with the fall of Constantinople ; or, coming down still nearer to our own times, with the discovery of America, or the great German revolution of the sixteenth century. Some, endeavouring to be still more precise, have divided the whole into two periods, which they have distinguished as the dark and the middle ages ; and then, the transition-period is not to be regarded as extending from the classic to the modern, but only from the dark to the more illuminated.

I venture to take the largest range ; to begin with the cessation—the extinction by its own decay—of the old world in the fifth century, and not to regard the period as closed but by the revolutionary events of the sixteenth. What, then, in the broadest view, are the causes of change ? In attempting to indicate these, I may quote one name of great authority, an author not perhaps always perfectly accurate, but characterized by deep, strong thought. Hegel regards the middle period as distinctively the *German* or *Teutonic* age. Its characteristic feature is, he says, the entrance of the Teutonic race within the pale of civilisation ; the ascendancy of German mind and forms of thought—German mind prevailing over the old classic mind ; and, though *we* may not be disposed to ascribe such exclusive importance to the German element, it is a fact that the change was introduced by the Teutonic race beginning to form itself into nations,—to possess a literature of its own. Hitherto their history has been only a matter of

antiquarian research. If we look at all which had been wrought among the Germans before the time of Tacitus—though a fabric which even Rome had not power to shake—the history of it is as yet but a subject of archæological interest : from this time it becomes as living as classic history itself ; we feel it *must* leave its trace on the literature of the coming age.

And then another immense change has been going on, going on even before the coming in of the new Teutonic influence. This was the introduction of Christianity into the sphere of general civilisation. Civilisation is becoming more and more Christian during that time. It is interesting to mark, standing as on a height from which we can take in the whole range of view, not so minutely as one standing on the plain but more entirely, the relation between these two great influences, and what the new character is which was brought out by the confluence of those two new elements—Germanism and Christianity. Guizot with his characteristic largeness of observation and sharpness of view, sees how German thought modified the Christianity of Western Europe ; how different it became from the Christianity of the Eastern Church, because of its acting on these fresh new races. To those who wish to appreciate what the consequences were of this difference in the form, if I may so express myself, of the vessel, I would recommend the study of Milman ; and having such an author to refer them to, I discharge myself from the task of pursuing this subject further now.

Before the Gothic tribes mingled with the races

of Southern Europe, during the early period of Christianity, the civilisation, the literature of Europe were wholly *Roman*; this remained the case even when the literature became modified by Christianity.

This new element gradually brought a change over the form, and still more over the spirit of the existing literature; the tradition of the old classic literature was passing away, and in the sixth century finally died out. A new, strong, varied, deep literature came in its place—Ambrose, Jerome, Augustin lived, and imparted to it a new tone; *still* it was in the old language, *still* essentially Roman. As the forces of the empire died out by internal causes of decay,—slavery, the burden of an oppressive taxation, the enfeebling of the ties of family life—by the terrible moral and social corruption that prevailed, a new organization takes its place, and (not mainly through ecclesiastical ambition, but by mere necessity of circumstances) the *Church* takes the place of the *Empire*.

It is often brought as a reproach against the ecclesiastics of the dark ages, that they shut up all knowledge in dead languages. But I ask, How could it have been otherwise? In what language *could* it have been preserved? In that of Italy? But Latin *was* its language; corrupted, no doubt, though less by the influx of the German tribes, than by the decay of its own vital energies, for the German invaders were too few to produce any great effect. The same is true of Gaul and of Spain; the language spoken there also was mainly Latin. Whence is it supposed that any other language could come? Literature at this period *meant* Latin. What would have been

gained if they had attempted to preserve knowledge in the jargon which was gradually displacing Latin? This jargon, which was beginning to be used in legal documents, had been created by the notaries simply because they had ideas to express for which there were no terms in the old classic tongue; but it was in fact as yet no language, being wholly inadequate to the purposes of literature. For the conveyance of abstract ideas there was no provision in its vocabulary, and if there had, they were beyond the mental reach of those who spoke it. It will be well then calmly to settle it in our minds that Latin literature was not an arbitrary arrangement of the monks, but simply a historic necessity of the time. In France, Spain, and Italy, Latin bore then the same relation to the spoken language of the people, as the German of Goethe and Schiller bears to the popular dialects of Germany at this day.

But these Latin-speaking nations did not, it will be said, constitute Europe. Latin was in no sense the language of the German tribes. But what, I ask, were the Germans of this period? They were Pagans, dissociated entirely from literature. This is true also even of that portion of the race which began to occupy England within half a century from the breaking up of the great Roman Empire; they were not developed enough to give a literature to those among whom they came. For, although Bede gives the middle of the fifth century as the date of the Saxon invasion of Britain, and although it was then that the Angles, who ultimately gave their name to the country, fully possessed themselves of it, there had been a gradual influx of Frisians from the close

of the third century. Not even at the later of these dates, however, was there in England any other civilisation or any other literature than that of Rome.

But why was there no language but Latin in Italy, France, and Spain? The names of their Gothic conquerors fill a large space in the history of the time. We read of Ostrogoths, Burgundians, Franks, Visigoths, Vandals. Had *they* no literature? and why not? Two reasons may be given. They were mere invading armies; the conquerors speedily adopted the language, learning, literature of the conquered, preserving nothing of their own but the military prowess which made them conquerors. It was impossible that a vernacular language could grow up in these circumstances; partly, also, the influence of Christianity prevented it. These thoughts are worth steady consideration; that, instead of abusing the monks, we may be thankful that through their instrumentality any literature was preserved.

That a magnificent change afterwards took place we know; that vernacular languages did spring up in Europe, mainly through Teutonic influence, *and first in this country*. To the illustration of this fact I shall devote what remains of the present lecture.

On the Continent, there exists among the Teutonic races a kind of patriotism hardly known here; not a boastful, but a pleasing pride in their own past. Look at their great epic poem, the *Nibelungen Noth!* Monarchs have been proud to contribute to its illustration—the people feel a national interest in its elucidation—it is the object of general affection and enthusiasm. I am glad to say there is the beginning

of a similar spirit among ourselves, with regard to our own great national epic, *Beowulf*. This we owe to the recent elucidation of it by our greatest Anglo-Saxon scholar, Kemble. Yet it cannot be said that there is anything like national sympathy excited by his attempt. For five Englishmen who are interested in the *Nibelungen*, I find there is scarcely one who cares, perhaps even knows, of the edition of *Beowulf* by Kemble. Englishmen care more for the comparatively recent foreign epic than for their own Saxon poem. The prevalent English tone is that of disdain for their own ancient literature; they like to disparage the remote past of their own country—to cut themselves off from all association with the times before the Reformation. I will not stay to ask whether this spirit is the spirit of the Reformation.

Beowulf is written in undeniable Scotch, but it was also the *English* of that period. In that great revolution by which the unity of Rome passed into the multiformity of modern Europe—"Unity in vast variety," as Guizot expressively calls it—the Anglo-Saxons were distinguished by the special and lofty part they took in the new order of things. The German race began to enter the pale of Christianity in the fifth century; and the thought had forced itself on several of the leaders of the time, that if the Gothic tribes could be converted to the true faith, it would do more than aught else for the civilisation of Europe. Gregory the Great, viewing the matter from the spiritual or religious point of view in which it naturally presented itself to him, thought that if he could effect *this* he would do much for them and more for Europe.

At the close of the sixth century, the mission began—it soon extended itself; at the end of the next, literature had been introduced here to an extent nearly incredible. It was, as might be expected, at first exclusively ecclesiastical. Theodore from Tarsus, Adrian from Africa came with books, and the result of their teaching was, Bede says, that before the end of the century, many were as familiar with Greek and Latin as with their own tongue.

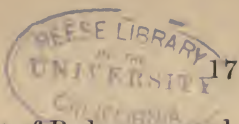
Bede is a sober honest man, and he is speaking of what occurred nearly about the period of his own birth; we have no reason, therefore, to doubt his testimony. I have no doubt that, compared with modern classical attainments, their scholarship was very humble, that their chance of first-class honours at Oxford would have been small; but their scholarship, such as it was, was derived from men to whom Greek and Latin were living languages, men reading in their own native speech, and whose teaching would thus possess a great degree of liveliness and vivid reality, though accompanied by much of the inaccuracy of living use.

The fact of the Anglo-Saxon nation thus becoming possessed of the literature of Europe gave rise to two important consequences. It was the first German nation which possessed itself of classic literature. Was this to germinate? Was it to bear fruit? Bede himself is one great proof that in England literature had already become a vital thing. In the year 700, he wrote in Latin his history of Anglo-Saxon England, no small work, which he achieved laboriously and accurately. When therefore, we hear the eighth century spoken of as the darkest of the dark ages,

we must reply, "Not here at least," and we produce Bede as our proof.

But we may be asked, What has this to do with Europe at large? It may be a great fact for us, but what is it for the mass of European states? Had they a literature of their own? Once more I ask, How could they? How could the literature of France or Spain for instance, but be merged in Latin, seeing they had no vernacular tongue, and no national oneness? Here, on the contrary, we find, not a small aristocracy, governing serfs of a different race, but a compact homogeneous mass; king, noble, churl, were all one. The high did not look down on the low with disdain, nor the low look up to the high with slavish hopelessness. So that we may say, not boastingly, but with earnest thankfulness, that before any other part of Europe, Anglo-Saxon England was capable of a vernacular literature, because in England there *was* a *people*. Abroad, Gothic literature was impossible; here it was possible, because there was a Gothic *nation*. Bede was for a century regarded, on the Continent as well as at home, not as a teacher merely, but as in himself a library. He took his place side by side with the great Fathers of the Church, his authority being quoted and submitted to in a Council of the Church held at this time.

I said there was the *possibility* of a vernacular literature in England, I did not say it as yet existed. Bede wrote in Latin, but in the beginning of the next century this education of the Saxon mind brought forth fruit. What Gregory had foreseen took place. Winfrith of Wessex, whose death was



only twenty years later than that of Bede, appeared, and he was not the first who lost his life in the effort to convert the Gothic tribes to Christianity. The importance of a vernacular language was felt to be so great that these missionaries were not even satisfied with high German ; they sought a people who spoke low German, and therefore went among the Frisians. Boniface, by which name Winfrith is better known, went forth on his noble mission, and grateful Germany acknowledges him as its apostle.

These are the first steps by which the Gothic tribes were brought within the pale of civilisation. So essential was their conversion to Christianity seen to be to their civilisation, and thus to the general peace of Europe, that Charlemagne, in his rough way, and our own Alfred in his milder one, both adopted the same policy. We read that when Alfred had conquered a tribe of Danes, he refused to capitulate with them on any other terms but that the king and people should be all baptized. We may regard this as giving proof only of narrow-minded and hard-hearted bigotry, but it was not so ; Alfred was not either hard-hearted or narrow-minded. Daily experience had taught him, as it had taught Charlemagne, that no treaty could be relied on with the Pagan tribes ; that the only hope of erecting a barrier which would not be burst by the barbarians, lay in their being brought within the pale of civilisation by means of Christianity. I am not justifying the course they took, I am only explaining the fact, that when these kings refused to treat with the unbaptized, they were adopting a policy deemed necessary for the peace of Europe. And this necessity was acquiesced in by many

in this country who were not violent—who devoted their own lives to the conversion of the heathen around them.

There is a beautiful letter extant in which Boniface asks a friend to plead with the Emperor to allow him to lay down the archbishopric of Mentz, the metropolitan see, the possession of which made him primate of the Frankish empire, and invested him with an ecclesiastical supremacy little, if at all, inferior to the military supremacy of the Emperor himself. Boniface was old; it may seem little wonderful that he should wish to resign so burdensome a dignity. But for what did he resign it? To what other works did he betake himself? Why did he strip himself of the mitre and the robe? Not that he might rest, but that he might go down the Rhine, to his old work of converting the Frisians. Not long after, while engaged in baptizing a body of converts, a band of heathens came suddenly upon them. The converts wished to defend themselves and their bishop, but Boniface refused to oppose violence with violence. He fell; and has been erected into a saint and a martyr. I only call him a good, earnest, and devoted man.

I must, in passing, however, correct a mistake into which I may have inadvertently led you. Boniface was not the contemporary of Charlemagne, but rather of his immediate predecessors, Pepin d'Héristal and Carloman; but the unity of policy in the Carovingian race is the point of main importance; along with the fact, that though there was much in that policy which our consciences cannot justify, it was at the time virtually acquiesced in, and regarded

as necessary by good and devoted men, who were ready to go forth and be slain in a cause which they knew to be of God, and who themselves endeavoured to acquire influence only in order to use it in promoting Christian ends and aims.

In the year 800, when Charlemagne became not only king of France, but head of the Roman empire, he associated with himself the highest men his discerning eye could mark, in a kind of labour very much resembling some of our own modern efforts to promote civilisation. Their first object was to educate the transcribers of manuscripts, in order to secure their competency to produce accurate copies; but they soon rose higher in their aims, and attempted the correction of the MSS. Scriptures in Latin, Greek, and even Hebrew.

Amongst these men not the least distinguished was Alcuin, an Anglo-Saxon, whom the Emperor employed as a kind of Minister of Instruction, for promoting the interests of literature and science. Alcuin had been the favourite of two successive archbishops in England, and would gladly have lived and died in his original place as master of a school at York; but the direct practical and earnest mind of Charlemagne saw that he was the right man for his purpose; he gave him the bishopric of Tours, and would never afterwards part with him.

We have now arrived at the end of our proposed course; having shown the importance to Europe of the admission of the German race within the pale of civilisation, as realized first in the Anglo-Saxons, and exemplified, as we have seen, in three striking individual instances, those of Bede, Boniface, and

Alcuin, and shown also that the possibility of a vernacular literature depended, not on taste or choice, but on the possession of a *nationality*; that Latin *could not but be* the language of the literature of Europe *till* nationality was attained,—that it ceased to be so whenever any tribe became a nation.

To one man of practical energy, the greatest not only in England, but, may I not venture to say, in all European history—to our own King Alfred, occurred the simple English idea—simple and evident to common sense when found out, but so uncommon till he suggested it—*that a nation must have a vernacular language*. Seeing that learning (which still meant Latin) was ever at the mercy of the Danish invaders, who so ruthlessly swept over the country; that there are records of but one man and one boy being left in a monastery after one of their inroads; and seeing that the result of this was a degree of ignorance of this *only* literature, the extent of which, as described by writers of the time, is nearly incredible, and that consequently the learning of the Church was wholly at the mercy of the heathen,—Alfred writes a letter which he sends all round to the bishops and heads of monasteries—“*Let us have learning with all speed put into English, let that be the first object of education, then let those who have leisure pursue the study of Greek and Latin.*”

And what was the fruit of this? Alfred, who was a *working man*, with much of the sailor in him (he was, in truth, the real founder of the English navy), translated Bede's History himself. It was he also who incited the monks, or, at least, coincident with his efforts, the attempt *was* made in many mona-

steries, to keep an Anglo-Saxon chronicle. Aelfric, another scholar of the time, wrote a homily to familiarize the people with the history of their own country; another to awaken their interest in the Scriptures. As another instance of common sense, I may tell you of Alfred doing what would never have occurred to a mere scholar, he took down with his own hand the narrative of some sailors who had visited the Baltic and the White Seas.

The extent to which the vernacular literature was now studied is proved by the quantity of MSS. still in existence, which, especially considering the number that must have been destroyed in the general devastation of the English monasteries at the time of the Reformation, cannot be paralleled in the history of any other nation, and in itself is sufficient evidence of the extent to which the public had been brought into contact with literature.

For the benefit of those who prefer proof to assertion, I shall conclude with two quotations. Aelfric, in a homily *ad populum*, in urging the importance of knowing the history of Gregory, which had been translated by Alfred the king, says, "But as it may not have been read by all." In no other country in Europe could such language have been used at that time, implying such a general amount of reading in the vernacular speech.

Again, he says, in reference to some fact to which he had alluded, "This is spoken of in *many* English books; but there are so many errors in these books, that I think it well to state it correctly." Books at this time, then, were so common as to influence a

general audience, and therefore correction was necessary where there had been error.

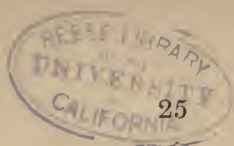
Thus our nation anticipated a process which was afterwards to be extended to the whole of Europe. It anticipated a popularization of literature which was to become universal, but which was as yet found in England alone.

LECTURE II.

IN my last lecture I endeavoured to show what were those circumstances which, throughout a great and important part of Europe, identified learning with Latin,—how it came to pass that for centuries there not only was not, but there could not be, any properly vernacular literature in Italy, or France, or Spain, and what those very peculiar circumstances were which qualified the Anglo-Saxon race to be the great channel of communication between the Romanized peoples of the south and the as yet uncivilized Teutonic races of the Continent,—how it was that the Anglo-Saxons were the first among the Germanic races to possess a Latin literature,—how important and fresh that literature was in itself, compared with the literature in Latin of the southern nations of Europe,—how it was, again, that during the time which is represented by Bede, Boniface, and Aldhelm, the learned, literary, Latin-speaking and writing class of Anglo-Saxon Englishmen were the great means of introducing Christianity, civilisation, and literature into continental Germany ; and, lastly, how it came to pass that they were the first nation of Europe to have a properly vernacular literature of their own. I pointed out to you how the *genius*

—for such broad and effective common sense as was manifested on this occasion deserves that name—how the genius of Alfred operated in this matter ; how he came to what, from the grandeur of its results, we may call the *magnificent* decision that henceforward “ it was needful for his kingdom that whatever knowledge was contained in the Latin language should, as fast as possible, be transferred into English,—that all men should first learn English, and then afterwards those who had leisure might give themselves to the study of the Latin tongue.”

Thus far had we advanced in the lecture of last Tuesday evening. On the Continent, meanwhile, great revolutions were going on. A century before Alfred, Charlemagne had made his gigantic attempt, ineffectual as to its immediate object, that of uniting all civilized continental Europe, west of Greece, into one vast monarchy ; but, nevertheless, leaving great and permanent results on the social, political, intellectual, and, perhaps, above all, on the ecclesiastical condition of the whole of that great region. But it was destined to be broken up : as he left it, it could not remain ; and, as I have shown you, it was impossible that it should have as yet either a Teutonic literature—the Franks being merely a handful of military leaders, forming the nobility of a conquered country, which was rapidly losing not only its language but all its traditions,—or that it should have a Romanic literature, that is, a literature in a new language formed out of the Roman ; for on the one hand, such languages were not yet sufficiently developed, while on the other (and this is a very important element in the consideration of the subject), the relation of the new



languages now forming from the Latin, was so close to it that Latin continued to bear to them the relation of a classical form of the same speech. If you were to ask what was the classical form of the popular language of France at that period, I would reply, it was Latin ; of Italy, it was Latin ; of Spain, it was Latin : and, therefore, learned and cultivated men continued to study, and to write, nay, even to speak in Latin, and to feel that they were expressing themselves substantially in the same language with the mass of the people, only with greater correctness and elegance.

But there were the elements at least of a literature, though we can hardly as yet call them a literature, and these deserving of great consideration, existing among the Teutonic races ; and other elements began very soon to display themselves among the Romance races also. For convenience, and to save the necessity of frequent repetitions, I shall use this word ; signifying by it the races so Romanized, as that a language based on the Roman has continued to be spoken by them even to the present day : in that sense I will speak of Romance races, Romance language, Romance literature ; and the word, in some variety of form, is now pretty generally adopted for that purpose. We turn now to our own country : let us consider for a little what ingredients existed for a popular literature there ; for, although I have called the literature founded in the days of Alfred, and very mainly by his means, by the name of a *vernacular* literature—a literature in the language of the country—it could hardly as yet be called a *popular* literature. Translations, for example, of the

Ecclesiastical History of Bede, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, were the writings which then had the nearest relation to the popular mind. But there were in Anglo-Saxon England *ingredients* of a literature strictly popular, long before the time of Alfred. I have already named the poem of *Beowulf*. It is admitted by the best authorities that the poem in its existing form belongs to the eighth, or at latest to the ninth century. Its materials are, however, altogether derived from ancient Angle traditions : not only so, but there is no reason at all to believe that the substance of the poem has been altered in giving it the shape which it wears at present. It is the Angle dialect, using that word in the sense in which it used to be employed, as distinguishing the kingdoms of the north and east among the Anglo-Saxons, from those of the west and south ; it is the Angle dialect of the Saxon tongue in which it is written, and it is the dialect of the eighth or ninth century. This is not disputed. But let us consider further : supposing the Angles had brought with them a national poem or series of poems of the sixth or seventh centuries, or even earlier, previous to the final occupation of so great a part of this island in the fifth century by the Angles and Saxons,—supposing they were in possession of such a poem, and supposing it retained its popularity ; first of all let us inquire by what means it could do so. The two anecdotes, one of which at least I mentioned to you in my last lecture, will illustrate this. I told you that Cædmon, in the end of the seventh century, complains that when the song and harp went round he was not able to use them ; so customary even

among his class, was the enjoyment of poetry with music, as an addition to the charms of what they in very downright German called a *bérscipe* (beer-drinking)—that is, a feast, a merry-making. Again, Aldhelm, precisely at the same time—the close of the seventh century—was wont to take his harp, and to attract audiences by singing Saxon glees, that is, traditional songs or ballads, and then addressed himself to the more serious objects which he had in view. Abundance of proof is ready, but these two instances show what were the habits of the Anglo-Saxons in this respect. Well, if they had a poem containing traditions of their ancestors, full of the kind of excitement which their imaginations loved, if it had been brought with them across the sea, if it continued to be sung during the seventh and eighth centuries on such occasions as I have mentioned, what would be likely to happen to it? Two things certainly. It would be—I will not say Christianized, but de-paganized: it would, in the first place, be de-paganized; and, in the second place, modernized in its language. It would be de-paganized: the Anglo-Saxons of that age were too earnest and too simple in their Christian faith to listen with any pleasure to songs about their ancestors, which should remind them of their false faith in those whom they now looked on as demons—of a faith which they now regarded as involving perdition; everything of this sort would be instinctively dropped. Then, again, the dialect would be modernized; and this would happen insensibly. The extent to which all manuscript writings passing through the hands of copyists, are, in course of centuries, liable to change of this sort, is well known.

I have seen three or four manuscripts of the same work, all belonging to the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, and yet written in completely different dialects, without any intention of translating, but simply because the transcriber wished to write the manuscript in the form most intelligible to himself and those around him. But, far more, the popular rhapsodist, singing for the immediate entertainment of those gathered around him, would sing in a language sure to be intelligible to them. And many changes would take place without his being aware of it. One would take down from the song of another the poem which he himself intended to recite; and thus, by insensible gradations, it would pass from the language—let us say of the fifth century—into that in which we now find it, the eighth or ninth. As to the de-paganizing, as I called it, it does not amount at all to the degree of change which passed on the *Nibelungen Noth*. For example, in that poem of the ancient southern races of Germany, the heroes and ladies—the different characters introduced—have not only ceased to be Pagans, as in *Beowulf*, but they have become positive Christians; they go to mass, they practise the observances which were regarded as essential to religious character in the thirteenth century, in the forms of which the poem has been preserved to us. And, therefore, without comparing the intrinsic merits, the vividness or fulness of the two poems, I venture to place the *Beowulf* much higher than the *Nibelungen*, in a purely antiquarian point of view. It is intrinsically older, and we have it much nearer in shape to the original composition.

My object in such a brief course of lectures—traversing (not by my choice) so vast a space of time—must necessarily be to select certain great groups of facts, persons, and works—and to characterize them in a way which may guide you whether you be afterwards engaged in the study of individual works, or seeking to form an acquaintance with the general history of the period. Specimens of *Beowulf*, therefore, I shall not attempt to give you. Its tone is that of a north-west Homeric age. There is more of the sea ; there is a far gloomier imagination ; superstition as distinguished from the imaginative Polytheism of the east, holds, perhaps, a larger place ; there is something that seems to aim to be greater, but cannot make itself nearly so distinct or so harmonious. Grand is the picture in the beginning of the poem of the old hero who feels his arm growing too weak for battle, who does not choose—if he die not in the field—to die in the sight of men at all, for whom a magnificent ship is provided, of which the poet gives the most brilliant description that the northern love of the sea and of ships can enable him to do—abundance of treasure is heaped upon its deck, the old hero is placed alone lying at the root of its mast, and it is then driven forth to sea ; no man of that age or this, no eye under heaven hath seen, says the poet, what became of it. Not the description only, but the fact itself, is altogether characteristic of that vast-reaching romance of the imagination of these north-western regions ; which was not the romance of thought only, but which—from the period of the occupation of this island by the Anglo-Saxons, through the whole history of the

Danish invasion, and down to the possession of Sicily and the south of Italy by the Normans of the eleventh century—turned itself into the romance of action.

Such were some of the materials—I call them materials rather than actual literature—which the Anglo-Saxons had for a popular literature. Very soon this poetry-loving people began to put their new thoughts, their Christian thoughts, into poetic forms. Cædmon and Aldhelm I have already mentioned. There are fragments of Anglo-Saxon poetry in print, on subjects drawn from the Old Testament, from the New Testament, sometimes from legends of the Church, having perhaps a higher tone of poetry than the works of Cædmon; but everywhere we see the effects of that which I described to you in my former lecture—a homogeneous people continuing to speak their ancient mother-tongue, and predisposed to form a literature, popular in the true sense of the word, that is, belonging to the people as a whole, in a manner in which no other European nation at that time could be expected to do.

How fared it with the rest of Europe meanwhile? England, very soon after the time to which my last lecture reached, that is about the middle of the tenth century, fell first under one foreign yoke, and then under another. It became for a short season an appendage to the kingdom of Denmark, and then the Norman conquest took place. The popular literature persisted. We have what is called semi-Saxon, that is, Saxon in the alteration of form to which it was naturally liable; we have poems and other works in the twelfth century in that dialect, and that dialect continued to be used in works intended

for the mass of the population down to the thirteenth. The popular literature still subsisted, but it could not be what it had been. It had not the character which a language derives from all classes of the community alike speaking it—those who stand highest and who are most cultivated, as well as the mass of the population. We shall have occasion to take it up at this later stage afterwards. Meanwhile, we go on to consider what there was on the Continent most analogous to this popular literature which I have been describing as at so early a date, forming itself in Anglo-Saxon England. Now, you will remember that the hope of this taking place on the Continent depended on the development of new languages. In the thirteenth century we find works in the French language as we now understand it, although in a somewhat antiquated form. We also find works in the Italian language. By the succeeding century, the fourteenth, we have works in the English language, not the ancient Anglo-Saxon, but substantially that complex and modified tongue which we now speak. But none of the languages which I have named existed at the period to which I am specially directing your attention.

In the time of Alfred there was not on the Continent such a thing as the French, Italian, or Spanish tongues, as we understand them. Yet there *was* a vernacular literature growing up in very singular circumstances, and the history of whose extinction, if we may not exactly say *in* blood, yet *by* blood, is one of the most conspicuous events in the history of the Middle Ages. As early as Charlemagne's time, an effort was made to give a literary character to

the Romance languages to this extent and no farther. The Council of Mentz having ordered that the priest should in the language of the country, that is, in the Teutonic language, convey the substance of the homily which had been drawn up in Latin, the Council of Rheims and of Tours gave similar directions in regard to the Romance provinces, where a modified Latin was the popular language of the country.

It is very remarkable that while we have multitudes of Anglo-Saxon homilies, centuries earlier than any vernacular literature elsewhere of the time I am describing, and while the Anglo-Saxon literature has been permanent, there is no trace whatever of any popular religious addresses either in the Germanic language of the empire of Charlemagne on the one hand, or, on the other hand, in the popular language of France. M. Fauriel, the author of the excellent history of the Troubadour poetry, has called our attention to a singular fact connected with this matter, his explanation of which appears, at all events, worthy of consideration. He says that while the Council of Mentz ordered that popular audiences should be addressed in German, and while the Council of Rheims and Tours gave similar directions for northern and central France, viz., that the Romance or growing French language should be employed there in popular religious addresses, the Councils of Arles and Châlons in the south and east of France gave no such directions. Now, how is this to be understood? He says there are only two possible explanations. The time is nearly the same, the objects of the Councils in general are so very similar that we must suppose that they intended,



on the whole, to accomplish similar results. And he says there are only two possible explanations of the omission in the latter case ; the one is this, that the Latin discourse was understood by the people in Southern France ; and the other is, that the use of the popular language from the pulpit was already familiar there. It appears to me that something between the two is probably the truth of the matter, and will quite account for the omission. If the popular language were near to the Latin, two consequences would follow. One we are very familiar with in the history of that period—the learned class would speak worse Latin and come nearer to the popular language than elsewhere. We find a priest in the Middle Ages complaining that in the north of Italy the clergy found it difficult to keep their language pure, because the language which they were accustomed to speak, was so near the Latin, that they were constantly confusing the two. This appears to me to be probably the cause that in the south of France no interference on the subject was required from the Councils of the Church. It may seem that we are making much of small indications, but we have only small indications in the matter. And the most striking fact connected with these attempts in the reign of Charlemagne is, as I have said, that in the immediately succeeding century, or in the century after that, there is not the slightest trace or record of any discourses similar to the homilies of Alcuin in England, and to the great number of Anglo-Saxon homilies that still remain unedited in our libraries.

But vernacular literature was to show itself in Southern France. The country was peculiarly situ-

ated : a country of trade from as early a period almost as we know anything of Gaul—the mere name of Marseilles will be sufficient to recall this to your recollection—a country retaining to a greater extent than any other part of the Roman empire the Roman forms of municipal government. They had given up the strict forms of the law, but they still continued to have their Magistrates and Town Councils ; and the organization of their towns was very similar to what the Romans had left them. Then came the Crusades in the end of the eleventh century, in which this country of trade and municipalities, so favourably situated by nature, both as to the production of articles of export and the facility of import, took a prominent part, and which were the first means of bringing Western Europe into free communication with the thoughts, the manners, and social condition of remote regions not belonging to the communion of the Western Church. All the effects justly ascribed to the Crusades seem to have been felt in Southern France more than elsewhere. Wealth continued to increase along with a certain liberalism of notions ; and an appreciation of the chivalry of the Mahometans of Syria, Egypt, and particularly of Spain, resulted from intercourse—sometimes in war and sometimes in peace—with the Saracens. This continued during a period of nearly two hundred years to characterize and strongly to influence the development of Southern France—the development, you may say generally, of Languedoc and Dauphiné, and in a vaguer manner, and not to the same extent, of the whole country from Lyons on the east to Bordeaux on the south-west.

It was not wonderful that a country such as I have described, should be less settled in a religious sense than other parts of Europe. They were *compelled* to think of differences of faith—they were compelled to acknowledge good in those who differed extremely from themselves. But besides this, there was of old standing an element alien to the Catholic orthodoxy of the time strongly established in Southern France, or rather I ought to say, several elements. I owe to Dean Milman what, after some previous study of the subject, appears to me an exceedingly just classification of these elements. He speaks of the simple Anti-sacerdotalism, then of the Scriptural Anti-sacerdotalism, and then again of the Manichæism of this country. By simple Anti-sacerdotalists, he means men who, under the instruction of the Catholic Church itself, had got to lay hold exclusively of the spiritual and moral elements of Christianity,—who had got to feel that doing right and keeping from wrong, believing in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and, above all, waiting for illumination from God, were sufficient to keep a man and a body of men right, even without that supernal efficacy of the Sacraments of the Church, dependent on the powers of the priesthood, which the Catholic Europe around them regarded as *absolutely, vitally, indispensably essential and necessary*. In the 12th century, in St. Bernard's time, there are signal outbreaks of this spirit in the south of France. Bernard, the most electric man that ever lived, who seemed to have the power, like a thunder-cloud in nature, of prostrating before him whole *rows* of men—prostrating them on the spot, whatever previous differences

of opinion or of purpose there might have been between him and them ; he was sent to encounter this people, and, for a time, he prostrated *them* ; but his back seems hardly to have been turned before they got up again, and returned to the work in which they were formerly engaged.

Then there were the Scriptural Anti-sacerdotalists. It has been well established by Dr. Gilly and others, —indeed, the grand fact had been very much settled by Raynouard, in his edition of the *Nobla Leyczion*, and by the discovery of a version of the Scriptures of the 12th century—that the Waldenses and the Poor Men of Lyons were in the possession of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue. Here was a great commencement for a popular literature. These men used it at religious meetings ; and two of them ventured, in the end of the 11th century, to appear before the dangerous and formidable Pope Alexander the Third, and to present him with a copy of their Scriptures, accompanied, it appears, by some admonitions. The Pope received them apparently with a contemptuous indulgence ; but the grand charge made against them was that of preaching without being in holy orders, and the only admonition given to the ecclesiastical authorities in regard to them for a while, was that they should not allow them thus to encroach on the priestly office. The influence of these heretics, as they were called, was not small over the whole region which I have marked out for you, although, certainly, prevailing chiefly in the east towards the Alps and towards Lyons.

But, finally, there was an influence very distinguishable from both of these. One of the most

brilliant specimens of miniature painting of a great historical subject which you will find in Gibbon, is a description of the Paulician heretics of Samosata, and the heretics of Cappadocia. It is a brilliant subject in point of novelty, unlikeness to anything else, and no wonder it laid hold on the mind of Gibbon. He describes how the heresy arose from reading the New Testament, and especially the works of the Apostle Paul, from whom some think the sect derived its name. Milman has an ingenious suggestion founded on a passage of a French historian, that the fact of some of them at least being charged with believing that the Apostle Paul was a re-appearance of the Spirit of Christ, may have given rise to the name Paulicians. However this may be, it seems not at all doubted that it was one of the many confluences of Christianity with oriental beliefs and spiritual notions which were at that time not uncommon in that part of the East. The Paulicians were accused of Manichæism. It is not at all disputed that they held the two eternal principles—the material principle of evil, and the immaterial principle of good ; that they had the oriental feeling that the life of a man is to be spent in disengaging himself from the power of the eternal evil principle which has hold upon him by means of the flesh, and that he is, therefore, to get above and out of whatever is fleshly. There is something singularly oriental in much belonging to Southern France at this time. I have spoken of its connexion with the East by the Crusades, of its connexion with the Saracens of Spain ; and there certainly seems to have been in the Manichæism of Languedoc a great deal that would lead us

to seek for some remote oriental origin for the impressions and the mental habits of the people. But the influence of all these three sects, or different schools of belief in Languedoc, was astonishing. The Paulicians, I ought to have said, as you will see in that passage of Gibbon to which I have referred, had made their way across from Bulgaria and along the Danube, through Germany and into France, especially into Southern France. There they had established themselves, and there tradition had associated itself with whatever was congenial with it, and calculated to feed and foster it.

While there was so much *heresy*, to speak in the language of the time, there was rapidly increasing wealth; there was wealth and luxury in the towns, wealth and luxury at the seats of the great lords; lavish ostentation of wealth, ploughing ground and sowing silver money in it, and then turning the people into the field that they might search it out again; burning all manner of splendid drapery and furniture, nay, even fine horses at great feasts, by way of mere ostentation of prodigal opulence,—these things indicated a state of society in which men were willing to show and to seek the utmost enjoyment of their wealth, even in the lowest forms of enjoyment. The Church had sunk to a very low state. The Gallo-Roman bishops in the time of Charlemagne—I ought rather to say in the time of the Carlovingian monarchs—were in a condition which formed one great reason for the earnest desire of these monarchs to bring a reforming order of priests and bishops into the country; these they found chiefly, as I showed you, in Anglo-Saxon England. But the influence

of the Frankish Episcopacy of the Rhine never extended into the south, and especially the south-west of France. The Gallo-Roman bishops were in the first instance men of high family, and were appointed for the sake of their wealth. Having got the bishopric, according to the expression of one of them, they then set themselves to enjoy it. The priests, on the other hand, were taken from the poorest, least educated, least cultivated classes of the community. The influence of the Church was all but entirely gone, while the influence of these heretical teachers whom I have described to you had attained a great height. Ladies of noble family were joining themselves in numbers to their societies. But apart from the actual accession to their numbers, they shook the faith of the country in the authority of the Church, whether as to belief or practice. This is a phenomenon that constantly takes place. Where there are earnest disbelievers, those who are not earnest at all avail themselves rapidly and readily of all their suggestions, their arguments, and their example : so it was in Southern France.

The grand enjoyment of that country appears to have been at what was called the *Cours d'amour*, of which such ludicrous accounts used to be given in our books on the literature of the Middle Ages. The *Cour d'amour*, in fact, was simply the name for a festivity at the seat of a great noble. It was a festivity for all orders of persons. Open house was kept during a certain period ; only the very highest of the guests were specially invited ; under a given rank, whoever would might come, down to the very poorest of the people. There entertainments of all

sorts were carried on ; but above all there the Troubadour was expected, and there it was sure he would be heard.

About the eleventh century the Troubadours first made their appearance. It is common to name William of Poitiers, Duke of Aquitaine, as a type of the troubadour character. He was an ancestor of the family of Henry the Second of England, for Eleanor of England was the daughter of another William, Duke of Aquitaine, the son or grandson, I am not sure which, of this William the Troubadour. If I were asked what was the prominent feature in his character, I should say, *recklessness*. He is fond of war, and of excitement of every kind ; his poetry, taking the account of Fauriel, and the small specimens which Raynourd gives us, is characterized by the same recklessness. There is a certain quaint humour in it, abundance of licentiousness, and everything to show that the enjoyment of the man's life consisted in lawlessness. All the troubadours, however, were not like this man. In the next century, during the reign of Henry the Second of England, many of us are familiar with the figure of Bertrand de Born, the troubadour Tyrtæus ; the most passionate lover of war for war's sake that ever existed on this earth. Not a little of a barbarian he certainly was ; part of the enjoyment of war, as he describes it in his songs, is the peasantry flying in all directions as the army advances, seeking to save their lives, their property, and their cattle. But the sparkling of the spear-points, the shining of the standards in the sun, the clash of shields, the rolling of horse and man upon the ground, he speaks of with the intense zest of one

possessed by an appetite. He is the troubadour whom, you will remember, in the *Commedia* of Dante, as condemned eternally to hold in his hands his head separated from his body, because of the schism he had promoted—the schism, namely, between Henry the Second of England and his sons. The amorous poetry of the troubadours is often spoken of. Much of it is licentious, none of it in the least dangerous. The pleasure is not the pleasure of passion at all, but the pleasure of tricks of fancy, combined with tricks of melody. It appears to me that this is a correct definition of the troubadour poetry in the 12th century, and part of the 13th, when it was at its height. I shall use a homely illustration, but a very appropriate one. Take one of Thackeray's ballads, say the "Battle of the Shannon," and observe how much of the amusement is found in the dexterity with which certain words are applied, making the versification lively, and yet in consistency with the subject; or take another of his dolorous poems, a complaint of being found unexpectedly without the means of paying a bill at a hotel: there is only one rhyme in it from beginning to end, and the pleasure of reading it consists in the dexterity of the writer—the constant falling on his feet—the dexterity with which, under these hampers of rhyme, he still gets on, keeping up the merry jingle of versification with which he started. Now, as to form, this is the troubadour poetry always. You may make a child dance to a real troubadour ballad, without understanding its meaning in the least, provided you humour the rhythm and the rhyme to the extent which evidently gratified the ear of the people at

that time. And as regards meaning, it is a constant effort of dexterity ; the pleasure is as dependent on this dexterity as in the poems of Cowley at a later period. That any one will be dangerously fascinated with this poetry is not at all to be dreaded, even if it were written in a language conveying warmer associations than the extinct Romance language of the 12th century. But this was not by any means true of all the poetry of the troubadours. Recent writers dispose of it much too rapidly, as mainly characterized by the light grace of those essentially frivolous works, however ingenious in form these may be. The influence of a mere form was very prominent and very strong on the poetry of the southern races of Europe ; but in the next century—the 13th—that terrible age of Innocent III., of Foulques of Marseilles, of the Abbot Arnold, of Dominic, of the Spanish improvements in the Inquisition of the south of France ; that frightful age in which the collision took place between the luxurious orientalism—half Buddhist, half Saracen, which somehow implanted itself in Southern France—and the very sternest form of Latin Christianity ; in that age there were troubadours, whose voice deepened into a solemnity and earnestness becoming the period. Pierre Cardinal is of that time ; Sordello of Mantua also, who makes such a magnificent figure in the *Purgatorio* of Dante, and may indeed be regarded as the hero of that division of the great poem.

I cannot stop to illustrate in any way from the works of those writers,—which, indeed, Raynouard has made partially accessible,—the characteristics I have ascribed to them. Cardinal appears to have

been an orthodox Catholic ; but he was disgusted with the cruelties of the Papal legates, and especially of our Simon de Montfort, the leader of the army of the Cross in Southern France.

I have now to answer the question, How was it that this first vernacular literature of the south of Europe did not continue to develop itself? How have we no classical Provence literature as we have French and Italian literature? The south of France was, at the time I am describing, substantially an independent kingdom ; it was seeking a national development—it seemed to have in its favour many of the most important conditions of a national development, and these, with a central government of its own, it had in a much higher degree than Northern France itself. You will naturally ask, Had not Northern France the King? No doubt, but the king was king of the Isle of France, and almost of that alone. He was Suzerain of Normandy, but what power was he likely to have over the Norman dukes? He was Suzerain of Anjou and Aquitaine : what power would he have over Henry of England? He was Suzerain over Languedoc, but there he had less power than even in Normandy or Aquitaine. Languedoc was pursuing its career of national development, and its career of independent literary development, with nearly as good prospects of continuous progress as England itself. What put a stop to it? As I have said, *It was quenched in blood.* Innocent III. remonstrated with the lords and bishops of the country : he then threatened, and at last by legates he excommunicated, Raymond of Toulouse ; and then the stern episcopacy of Northern and Eastern France

was let loose on them, heading an army, composed in part of the very off-scourings of the French, German, and Italian frontiers. The *Roi des ribaulds*—the king of the ragamuffins—is a very important person in the wars of that time. In a short period the greatest military leader that perhaps Europe could furnish, was put at the head of the army—Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, a man earnest I do not doubt, but who knew not what spirit he was of. What things were done by him, what things were done by the ecclesiastical leaders of the crusading army, I will not sicken your hearts by describing in the detail that history enables us to do.

There is this peculiar feature about that frightful history,—that it is most fully recorded by a man having the lowest and most brutal sympathy with all the horrors that he has recorded—a man who puts down deliberately in his pages his *delight* in the howls of his victims from the flames, his delight in violation of truth, and in scenes which we turn from with horror. But when we hear of the inhabitants of two entire towns being put to the sword; when we hear the acknowledged principle, that not the *heresy* merely, but the *heretics* are to be exterminated; and when we know, on the authority of the enemies themselves, how widely spread that heresy had previously been, we can understand how Languedoc was thrown back centuries, and her progress of independent development finally arrested. For a yet more important circumstance than the temporary suffering of individuals is to be attended to. When she began to recover she found herself *provincialized*; she was no

longer a *nation*. The King of France had been going on steadily towards resuming not the mere claims of suzerainty, but the actual rule of the great provinces of the Empire, and Languedoc was one of his first achievements in this way. Sismondi describes the period from Hugh Capet to St. Louis as a period during which it was not worth while to count the kings, because France was not truly a monarchy. "It was," he says, "*the period of feudal anarchy.*" Now, where does he close this period of feudal anarchy? *With St. Louis, in the middle of the thirteenth century*; and in the middle of the thirteenth century this great accession of the province of Languedoc had been achieved: it was completed under the father of St. Louis, Louis VIII., and this was indeed the main cause of the possibility of fixing this date for the establishment of actual monarchy in France.

Thus the Troubadour literature passed away, but not without having exercised great influence on the literature of all Southern Europe. Perhaps the earliest specimen of romance (except those in the Greek language) which we have in Europe, preserving all the conditions of romance, is that which Fauriel describes, and which is called *Walter of Aquitaine*. The poem is written in Latin, and the hero is a Languedocian. He represents the national feeling of Southern France as sternly and passionately opposed to the Frankish monarchy, and to all its characteristics in Church and State, in language, and in popular character. Fauriel has established, I think, that this poem was known to the German romance writers of a later period.

He has shown that it had not a little influence on the development of romance in other nations of Europe. In the language of that country, I mean the Provençale, we have subsequently many romances. Raynouard has published a very lively romance, probably of the thirteenth century, in rattling rhyme, like one of Walter Scott's poems : it shows the long cultivation of that style of poetical art, and proves the mistake of those who think that the narrative form of poetry was at that early time peculiar to the north of France, as the lyrical form was to the south. The subjects of the romances of Southern France were those of the same great cycle of poetry elsewhere in Europe : Charlemagne and his Peers on the one hand, and Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table on the other. Fauriel's notion, that these ideas had never become poetry among the nations themselves to which they referred, is a very extravagant one. I cannot for one moment suppose that the Britons of England, or the Brétons of France, had not talked familiarly about Arthur at all, while the people of Languedoc had made him the subject of poetry. I would just as little suppose that the Franks had no traditions about Charlemagne and his Peers till the Aquitanians began to take up such subjects. But this much is certain, that at a very early period, and in the languages of the south of France, romances on these subjects had, at great length and with great liveliness of style, been composed before the close of the thirteenth century.

I have said that Troubadour literature had great influence over the rest of Southern Europe. Think

first of all of the lyrical poetry of Italy. In each one of the great divisions of the *Commedia* of Dante there is a Troubadour prominent : in the first there is Bertrand de Born ; in the second, Sordello of Mantua ; and in the third, there is that dreadful Foulques of Marseilles, the troubadour Bishop of Toulouse, who seems to have been a wanton rhymster in his early days, and in after life a despotic bigot. To other troubadours there is frequent reference in that poem. Sordello, whom Dante renders thus prominent, was himself an Italian. His poems are composed in the language of Southern France, as being the only classical modern language then existing ; and the poets of Florence immediately preceding Dante, wrote in the Provençale language. I must not venture to say that Dante himself did so ; for Signor Mazzini has expressed the greatest wrath and indignation against the supposition that so patriotic a man should have polluted himself by writing verses in a foreign language. I therefore say not so. I have no doubt Signor Mazzini knows better than most of us the probable genuineness of the Provençale sonnet ascribed to Dante ; but that Dante *knew* that literature, and that it greatly influenced him, I have given sufficient evidence. The poetry of Petrarch is a continuation of the troubadour poetry. I would say the lyrical poetry of Dante is a continuation of the troubadour poetry, but I confess I cannot say so, it seems to me so high above it. He *meant* to imitate the Troubadours, but he could not keep down to their standard. A ballata of Dante is as high above the troubadour poetry as a sonnet of Michael Angelo is above the rhymes of

Foulques of Marseilles ; still the influence is traceable. This was the only classical modern language in Europe before the Northern French became developed in the beginning of the thirteenth century, and before the Italian developed itself first in the poetry of Cavalcanti and others, next in that of Dante, and then in that of Petrarch and Boccaccio.

LECTURE III.

LET us consider as the leading idea in this course—in which it is very necessary that we should have general views to guide us through a vast range of details—the difference between the classical literature of the first two or three centuries, and the vernacular literature of modern Europe, arising in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries. According to this guiding principle we have first to consider that throughout a large portion of Europe, the classical language of Western Europe, that is, the Latin, continued to be a spoken tongue, in a gradual process of decay indeed—losing by degrees many of its forms, becoming, as it were, blunted in its grammatical character, and receiving slowly infusions of barbaric speech; but yet in the main, substantially the Roman language, as even to this day we find it to be, in Italy, in Spain, and in France. In consequence of this, the literature of the learned class, that is, literature written in the Latin language, was the only literature of these countries, throughout the whole of the earlier portion of this period. Latin there was, Latin chronicles, Latin lives of the saints, theology and philosophy written in Latin, but there was no modern language special to these countries

during at least six centuries of that portion of time of which we speak. Whence, we have asked, was a modern or vernacular literature to arise? We have shown that there were two attempts of this kind at comparatively early periods—one in North-western Europe, and the other in Southern Europe; the one in North-western Europe (the Anglo-Saxon literature making its appearance in the very century after the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity), the other in Southern Europe, the literature of Provence, best known as that of the Troubadours, although the troubadour literature of lyric poetry was only a part of a literature which was in some measure historical, and in a much larger measure consisted of romances in the modern sense of the word—a sense of the word derived from the very language of which we are speaking—the language of Southern France. It was a peculiar language, but I do not need to dwell on this point. You know that the distinction between the Langue d'Oc and the Langue d'Oyl or Langue d'Oui, is one which has perpetuated itself in the name of a great province of France. In the one part of France the word for “yes” was *hoc* or *this*, which gradually became *oc*; in the other it was *illud* or *that*, which gradually became *oy* or *hoc-illud*, as it is supposed by some to have been. The classification of the languages according to the form for “yes,” seems to have been an established one before the time of Dante’s famous treatise on speech in the modern vernacular tongues. There he lays down the division of European languages into the Lingua de Si, the Italian; the Lingua d'Oyl, the Northern French;

the *Lingua d'Oc*, the Southern French ; and the *Lingua de Jo*, the language of "ya" or "yes," in which of course the German and English are included. The principle is so very natural a one that it constantly re-appears without the least historical connexion. The people in the South Sea Islands call the French at the present day the Wee-wees, or the people of the *Lingua de Oui*, as it might be translated, on the same principle as Dante's.

What became of these two first attempts at national vernacular literature in Europe ? That of the Anglo-Saxons, if we regard it in one point of view, may be said to have been terminated first by the Danish Conquest, and then by the Norman Conquest. But, in another and truer point of view, it may be said that the Anglo-Saxon tongue has continued to be a literary language from the days of Cædmon and of Aldhelm down to the present time ; it forms the great bulk of our actual speech, and there is no period of absolute cessation. Indeed the grand break, the most palpable *fault* as a geologist might call it, that takes place at all in the history of the Anglo-Saxon literature, arises from the change in the nature of the language, which took place mainly in the thirteenth century. It used to be said that the Anglo-Saxon lost its grammatical forms, and approximated to the present English forms, in consequence of the Norman invasion. It is now admitted by the most competent judges, by Mr. Hallam and Dr. Latham for example, that this was not the case ; that the Anglo-Saxon was gradually losing its synthetic form, and that, apart from the Norman invasion altogether, we should have had a language

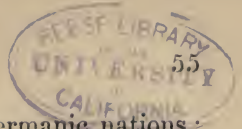
with comparatively little of inflection—little either of conjugation or declension. In what, then, would it have differed from actual English? It would have differed mainly in the absence of an infusion of about one-fifth of Norman French, which, beyond doubt, we owe to the Conquest. But the change did not take place at the Conquest. It is interesting to observe the remarkable purity of the Saxon language even after the Conquest—purity I mean not as to its grammatical form, for it was losing this, but purity as to its vocables. In the twelfth, and in the early part of the thirteenth century, you have what is called semi-Saxon with hardly a word of Norman French, that is the language of the people. You have, indeed, three languages and three literatures side by side; you have the Northern and Southern French of the Court and nobility; you have the Latin of the learned and ecclesiastical class, and you have the semi-Saxon of the people. And one of the most wonderful phenomena in the history of language, is the rapidity with which English, in our sense of the word, supersedes them all in the close of the thirteenth century, and in the beginning of the fourteenth. So that, then, truly we may say it is no longer Anglo-Saxon or semi-Saxon, but requires a new name, and for convenience' sake we call it English. But, unluckily, we are giving it the same name that Alfred and Bede gave to the Anglo-Saxon of their time; for when Alfred, in drawing up a law, for example, is stating the vulgar name of a place which he has already spoken of by the Latin name, he says, "in English," it is so called. Why I should have adverted to these circumstances relating more

particularly to the history of language than of literature will be seen more clearly perhaps as we proceed. I wished to explain to you at what period, and in what manner, the Anglo-Saxon literature may be considered as having come to a close—in what degree this is true—and yet to remind you that by carrying the conception too far we should introduce a false view of the matter, as though it had received a sudden extinction, instead of gradually but steadily passing into a new form—the form of the English literature, the literature of that language in which the works of Wycliffe and of Chaucer are written.

Then, again, in Southern France, while I speak of the Romance literature being quenched in blood by the war against the Albigenses, do not for a moment suppose that that extinction was immediate and total. I tried to impress on you that the great moving principle then was not so much the war in itself as the result of the war; namely, that Languedoc, instead of being elevated to an independent national development, became attached to the destinies of Northern France,—that the question was settled whether he who had originally been Count or Duke of Paris, or the Isle of France, on the one hand, or, on the other hand, the Count of Toulouse, was to be the ruling central power over the French nation. Had the latter been the case, we should have had even now a literature in the *Languedoc*; the former *was* the case, and therefore we have now a French literature in the *Languedoc*. But all the while the ecclesiastical literature, the literature of the learned class, was going on. It steadily persisted. It was never interrupted in the southern countries of Europe. In

England it had been introduced by the Roman missionaries, and there it continued more or less to be cultivated down to the Norman Conquest. But the great difference is this, that in the eighth century England was, beyond all question, at the head of the learned or ecclesiastical literature of Europe. In that century, called by some the darkest of the dark ages, we can boast of Bede, and Boniface, and Alcuin, and these are names not easily paralleled even in the most enlightened portion of the mediæval period; while, for a reason which I explained in the last lecture, the mind of England was diverted from the special cultivation of the Latin or ecclesiastical literature, and turned to the culture of its own speech, and to the application of that speech to all the objects of knowledge and thought which then occupied the attention of Europe, still the ecclesiastical literature, as I have said, went on.

It was the fashion in the last century to speak as if it were a great misfortune for history and for truth, that during this period the clergy, and especially monks, were the main authors. It was said, that with their narrow and bigoted views, with their ignorance of the affairs of the world, they could not be expected to measure the real interests of history, and must have left out much that is most worth knowing. In all this there is one grand oversight. If the main movement of European life at that time *was* ecclesiastical, then it is better for history that ecclesiastics should have put it on record. Now this is a question of fact; and as to the decision of the question of fact, there seems to me hardly any doubt. The grand *work* to be done was to bring



Christian civilisation among the Germanic nations ; the grand *result* of that work was the influence which Teutonic civilisation and Christianity came to exercise on all Europe, an influence whose proper period is not yet completed.

Now, if this be so, it was precisely the persons engaged in that work who best understood what was most essential in what was going on. So much does this appear to be the case, that, although it was said by no incompetent judge,—on being asked, “What is the best Church History in the English language?”—“There is no Church History in English except Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*,”—although this has been said, and though it is quite true that Gibbon, in his later volumes especially, began to apprehend the truth of the principle to which I have referred, and to see that the Church is as much the centre of the life of mediæval Europe, as the State was the centre of the life of Athens or of Rome ;—nevertheless, it has been found that even Gibbon does not sufficiently place it in the centre, to give a full and just view of the social vitality of that period ; and the expression which seems to me most compendiously to characterize the value and the merits of Milman’s recent *History of Latin Christianity* is this, that it is “the best and the completest mediæval history ;” and further, the reason why it is so, is precisely because it is a *Church* history. If that be the case—and to prove it at all *in extenso*, would of course occupy very different limits from those within which I am confined—it is very conceivable how it is best for us to have the history of that period put on record.

mainly, though not exclusively by Churchmen, looking at matters from an ecclesiastical point of view ;— *mainly*, I say, but not *exclusively*. Now, what are the beginnings of anything that can properly be called modern European history ? Of this I have undertaken to give you some, painfully cursory, but still *some*, account. A more difficult undertaking than to give, as I must give it, anything worth giving on this subject, I may say I have never had in hand ; and I really trust you will see how much indulgence is required by the mere nature of the enterprise itself.

During this period history gradually came to be written everywhere in Europe. Before the end of it we have Slavonic and Hungarian and Bohemian histories ; and throughout the whole period we have histories belonging to the great literary nations of Europe, those which still continue to be the centre of its intellectual and literary life. The subject to be contemplated is therefore a vast one. We must look at it from a distance ; we must try to look at it as from a height. What were the commencements then of modern European history ? They began, we have said, with the Church ; they began mainly in the monastery. In each of the great monasteries were to be found one at least, or sometimes many, whose duty to the community was that of scribes : they had to copy books ; they had to copy the books required for service, they had to copy the Scriptures, and the Fathers. At a very early period there was also the duty imposed on them of recording the benefactors of the Church, of naming those who had desired the prayers of the community, taking down the date of the death of a person, or the

date at which he was to be commemorated. The record thus kept very soon acquired a chronological form, to which the scribe in his scriptory, generally the most comfortable room in the cloisters, was tempted to make additions—notes of anything remarkable occurring in the history of the monastery, because the matters to which I have just referred were a portion of the monastic history ; at such a time an estate was bestowed ; at such a time a fire took place and burned down a great town ; at such a time a tyrannical lord in the neighbourhood, if on the Continent, or the Danes, if on the sea-coast of England or France, attacked the monastery and did more or less damage. Thus, by insensible degrees there grew up a chronicle of the monastery itself. But those events affecting the monastery were associated with events of a more general interest. An invasion of the Danes, though it might be most important to the monks of Peterborough or Croyland, on account of its effect on Peterborough or Croyland, was still an affair of concern to all England, and insensibly, perhaps, it came to be placed along with those matters affecting the monastery itself.

By such steps as this, I conceive, grew up the monastic chronicles, of which one of the most remarkable specimens is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. It is not only remarkable in itself, but also, from being in Anglo-Saxon, is entitled to a notice in the history of vernacular literature properly so called, the greater part of these chronicles, during the earlier period, being naturally written in the Latin language. That there were such chronicles in England we cannot doubt. More than a century before the time of which I speak,

England had produced a great ecclesiastical history, the valuable historical work of Bede, materials for which had been collected with the greatest pains, not only in Southern England, for example, at Canterbury and Winchester, which were not then politically connected with Northumbria where Bede lived,—and not only there, but even in Rome and in France, and wherever the influence of the clergy could be brought to bear. The existence of the work of Bede, however, has a tendency to mislead Englishmen as to the state of historical literature at the period. There is nothing else like it, or to compare with it : the bulk of Europe is still in the age of mere monastic chronicles or brief personal narratives. Frequently in Rome, and in other parts of Italy, but especially in Rome, brief personal narratives were written relating to exciting events, such as the siege of Rome by the Imperial forces, and the like ; but a history on such a scale, a process of collecting historical materials so like what would be adopted by a modern writer of a general history, you are not to look for anywhere else at that period than in Anglo-Saxon England. But the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle deserves a place in our sketch for quite a different reason. As its name implies, it is written in the language of the country.

It appears to have been part of the result of the great effort of Alfred for anglicising all the knowledge of the time. And some short pausing on the character of that Chronicle may help us a little in conceiving the nature of the ecclesiastical chronicles of that period. It seems to have had precisely such an origin as I have described. Then, possibly, at a later period it is adopted by another monastery, and

being so adopted, a preface is added to it, or at least an introductory history, an outline of Anglo-Saxon history down to the age of Alfred himself, for it is then that it seems to have become contemporary ; and according to the almost universal character of mediæval chronicles, this introductory historical notice goes back at least to Noah, but more generally to Adam. If we could get hold of any satisfactory data for all the stories contained in the earlier past—I will not say of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, but—of Villani's *History of Florence*, it would relieve archæologists from a great deal of fruitless labour. But these earlier documents, if the chroniclers ever possessed them, have certainly perished.

In the case of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, much incitement to historical research arose from their having been Christianized. They were not a little proud of the descent of their kings from Wodin, but then the uncomfortable reflection came across them, that Wodin was a false god, that he might even be identified with demons, with those whom it was excommunication to have anything to do with ; and therefore there was an earnest simple-hearted desire on the part of the monk, that there should be nothing unchristian in tracing the ascent of the kings to Wodin, and briefly he states that Wodin was the son of such a one who was the son of Sceáf, who was the son of Noah. This was rather perplexing, for the three sons of Noah are unfortunately enumerated in a book of far greater authority ; how then was this to be got over ? It was got over by a delicate wipe of the finger ; the son of Sceáf, who was the son of Noah, *and was born in the ark.*

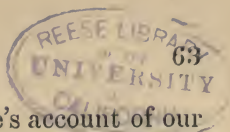
Thus, therefore, no difficulty could arise. Now, do not suppose that I am seizing on one humorous illustration which should give a disproportionate idea of the quantity of mere tradition, of mere guess-work, I am afraid sometimes of mere invention, that we find in the earlier part of these Chronicles. I refer any of you, who take sufficient interest in the subject, to the earlier part of Villani's *History of Florence*, where you will find, in the first place, accounts in the manner of Virgil's *Æneid*, of what became of the Trojans, how many went to Troy, how many were concerned in founding this city, and how many in founding that,—you will find all this in fuller detail than Virgil has given, gravely recorded as belonging to the history of the land. But are we, therefore, to reject these records with contempt? Far from it. Whenever the monkish record becomes contemporary it has *some* value, and generally speaking *great* value. You are, no doubt, much at the mercy of the writer; but another consideration, and a very consolatory one is this—great events, great crises of history are generally found to give additional fulness, vividness, and power to the monkish chronicles. For example, the first inspiration in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is due to the reign of Alfred, or rather I may say, to the Danish Invasion, and Alfred's vigorous and wise resistance; and then the Chronicle continues to be kept, and is contemporary ever after that.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is contemporary down to a considerably advanced period in the 12th century, where it breaks off. But at the time of the Conquest it receives a new inspiration; for example, the description of the person and the reign of William the

Conqueror is full of life and vigour, and constitutes one of our most important documents on this subject. Much of what I have said of the character of this particular work will apply to the monkish chronicles in general. But there was another sort of ecclesiastical historical literature, far more copious and abundant than even the chronicles—I refer to the Lives of the Saints. It has become, or rather it *had* become, for we have got to see the difficulty that was involved in that view of the matter—it *had* become the fashion to say, these lives are so full of miracles, and so much under the inspiration of credulity, that hardly any historical use can be made of them. But we must make a distinction here. In the first place, those of them that are contemporary, or nearly so, have generally but a very small proportion of the supernatural, in regard to which we can have any difficulty in explaining it. In the next place, even from an early period we have, in regard to the most prominent objects of Catholic veneration, other documents, besides the lives written by adorers, at a period somewhat remote from their lifetime,—we have very copious information, for example, as to the lives of Boniface and his companions. Bede, who has written the first great historical work belonging to modern or mediæval Europe, is also the author of many of the Lives of the Saints. And it is interesting to observe the distinction between those which are written from personal knowledge, and those which have been compiled from the best traditions which could be honestly and faithfully collected. A still higher point of view is taken by modern history. We say the miracles themselves

are part of the history of the time, inasmuch as they are part of the history of the mind of the time. I do not know how men saw the world in which they lived, how they conceived the things around them, unless I can see through what a transforming medium they regarded the men of their own generation or of the generation before them.

Thus we find biography written with increased painstaking and fulness of observation, growing up side by side with the history which was shaping itself out of the ecclesiastical chronicles. A very important era in the history of mediæval historical literature is marked by the age of Charlemagne ; and recollect, it is the literature I am speaking of—I speak of history simply as literature. Even in that point of view it is surely a crisis well worth noticing, when a man who was not an ecclesiastic, and who was not regarded as in the least like a saint—when a man like Charlemagne was thought worthy of a biography to himself, and not only so, but when he found a biographer among the most competent who could then have been engaged on such a task. On these accounts, the life of Charlemagne by Eginhard his secretary, is to be noted as one of the most remarkable dates in the literature now before us. And why ? Because such lives become henceforward more frequent. Men who had near access to great men, and who had opportunities of knowing and understanding them, began to place their character and acts on record, without the excuse, as it were, of their being, or having the prospect of being ecclesiastically canonized. So that about fifty years after the work of Eginhard, we have another biography



of a king. It is Asser of Sherborne's account of our King Alfred. Some of you are aware that the genuineness of this work has been questioned by writers of considerable authority; but I consider that Lappenberg, and especially Pauli in his recent work on this subject, have disposed of this objection. There is no doubt that we possess a work lamentably meagre, interpolated and dislocated, but still the substance of which is due to an intimate friend of the greatest perhaps of mediæval kings.

In the course of the succeeding century—for the death of Alfred took place in the beginning of the tenth century, and the Norman Conquest in the latter half of the eleventh—we have another biography of a great man, of a saint, indeed, in this case, but one not as yet quite recognised as such. I refer to it because it is a critical date, and a critical period in the development of history. It is rather a refinement in the historical point of view, considering that a pure biography is a different thing from the history of the acts of a public man. It is one thing to record facts affecting the man as an individual, and quite another to describe a man in his relations to public life, taking these relations to public life as the guiding principle of the work. Now, the biographies of Eadmer, the intimate friend of St. Anselm, show that a monk of the eleventh century had attained to this refinement. He writes the life of St. Anselm, and he also writes the history of the public events in which St. Anselm was engaged, and from this time we have the beginning of a contemporary document of the greatest importance for the historical review of after ages, possessing a copiousness and a distinctness in the

classification of materials which at so early a period was hardly to be looked for.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, as I have told you, derives its second great inspiration from the Norman Conquest. It is very interesting to observe the relations between great events and the production of great histories. You can hardly expect the one without the other. Herodotus and Thucydides are examples in point: the battle of Marathon and the Peloponnesian War demanded historians, and they obtained them. Now, the Norman Conquest was not, as we are perhaps apt to regard it, nothing more than a change of dynasty—the Norman Conquest was a great social revolution. It brought multitudes of learned ecclesiastics from the Continent to contemplate quite a new state of society, a race very different from any they had before had to do with. On the other hand, it brought the more cultivated minds in Anglo-Saxon England into altogether a new position, and into contact with a literature altogether new to them. The twelfth century is consequently a great age of historical development in England. The great work of William of Malmesbury; and then William of Malmesbury's continuation containing the contemporary history—are illustrations of what I say. If you take at once carefulness of investigation and power of representation into account, he is perhaps the greatest writer that the proper Middle Age produced in England; not however the most interesting, for I will honestly confess that I find his style too classical: I would rather have middle-age Latin about middle-age affairs. There is also less of the keen mediæval sense of the

individualities of men and of events in William of Malmesbury than there is in Ordericus Vitalis' History of the Dukes of Normandy, which was carried down to the Norman conquest of England. I cannot help thinking that this work of Ordericus Vitalis inspired the Modern History of that Conquest by Auguste Thierry: there is much of that vivid character about it which makes it natural that it should do so.

I will not now dwell longer on the development of the mediæval history of the times I have been describing. We are now fairly in the way of ample and vivid biographies, on the one hand, being produced, and, on the other, of chronicles having some such fulness and distinctness as to meet our modern demands in the way of documents. For example, we have in the twelfth century the Life of Beckett, so interesting and important in the first place, biographically, and because of the individual himself, and then again, because of his relation to the history of the time: we have all this set forth in a fulness of light which is quite surprising when contrasted with what we had in the preceding century. We know something of Beckett and his affairs, from at least three persons who were in intimate connexion with him; one of the three the very first writer of the time, whose work, full of lively description, and vivid pictures of the manners of the time, is the beginning of the modern idea of a historical work—I refer to John of Salisbury, whose letters are a perfect treasury of interesting matter connected with the time in which he lived. The letters of Peter of Blois may also be quoted.

Thus, history is beginning to develop itself into

something like the modern conception of what a history of European affairs ought to be. History before this was only busy in collecting materials for romance. I have mentioned the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the work of Villani. But the king of romantic history, or rather of romance, under the name of history, is certainly our own Geoffrey of Monmouth. What romance owes to Geoffrey of Monmouth it would be hard to record. He is the great source of all the stories about Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, and the romances of Northern and Southern France, from which afterwards the great poets of Italy and Spain drew their materials. Yet earlier there had been a work of what might be called, in the same way, romantic history in the Chronicles of the Pseudo-Turpin relating to Charlemagne: this is the source of all the stories as to the battle of Roncesvalles, the source of all the romances from which Petrarch, and Boccaccio, and Ariosto drew their materials. So that as far as romance and poetry are concerned, the historians of the early part of the Middle Age failed not in accumulating it.

Now, we have closed the twelfth century, and by the thirteenth we may say that the histories in the vernacular language of the various literary nations of Europe had fairly begun. I will merely name the taking of Constantinople by the Latins, and the establishment of the Latin empire there, in connexion with the work of Villehardouin, Seneschal of Champagne and Marshal of Romania, himself a prominent person in the expedition. In the North of France we have the work of Joinville—the Life

of St. Louis. I refer to these because they are important, as illustrating my position that now we have vernacular history fairly commenced: having at once the modern conception of history on the part of the writers, and the employment of the vernacular language which a short time before could hardly be said to exist. I now speak of Northern France. From that time forward we have most important chronicles in France and in French. We have the chronicle of St. Denis, of William of Nangis, and others.

The importance suddenly acquired by the Northern French language at this period is most remarkable. Brunetto Latini, the friend of Dante, writes his *Tesoretto* in the French language, not because he resided in France, but because that language was then better understood, and more valued by those who were likely to read such a work. Marco Polo, the great traveller, in like manner, first produced the history of his travels in French. Both of these men were Italians, and, therefore, in both cases the fact which I have mentioned is strong testimony to the prevalence of the French language in Europe thus early, for it is very early in its proper history. In the fourteenth century we begin to have the great vernacular Italian historians. Villani I have named repeatedly, and it is only necessary to refer to him again, lest any one should be misled as to the date at which he wrote. He is a contemporary of Dante—later than he in the age, but still contemporary. Dino Compagni, also of Florence, is another Italian historian; but my business is not with modern history. When we have passed through the mediæval period, and got some general notion of the history of that period, and have landed in history analogous in conception and cha-

racter to that of modern times, I have done—I am necessitated to close from the general conception of my undertaking. I ought perhaps to say, that to the next age belongs Philip de Comines in France, the intimate acquaintance, I may almost call him friend, of that strange creature, Louis XI. I refer to Comines as vouching for the truth of the assertion which I have made, that we are now fairly entered on what may be called the course of modern historical writings. And yet I have hardly named one familiar name. We have still been going through that subterranean passage of which I spoke in my first lecture, which men may visit as they do the Thames Tunnel, for curiosity, not because it lies in their road.

I broke off at the close of last lecture without having said anything of two great names which stood on my programme. They were entitled, so far, to the first place in this, but I thought it better to reserve them for the conclusion. They stand there to answer for me, that we are now at the beginning of the literature of that modern Europe to which we ourselves belong. The first of the names in that literature is that of Dante of Florence ; the first of the names in modern European literature belonging to our own country, with which we are all equally familiar, is that of Geoffrey Chaucer. Contemporary with Villani and Compagni, as I have said, was Dante Alighieri ; fifty years earlier than Philip de Comines was Geoffrey Chaucer : and they are entitled to this prominent place in a course of mediæval literature, not merely on account of their importance, but on account of their characteristic position, looking before and after. One is tempted, in contemplating Dante. to say, “ How completely he is the man of the middle

age—of the age that is passing away!” and then again to say, “How truly he is the man of the new age!” What a strange dawn of modern Europe is on the face of that man in the commencement of his own *Purgatorio*! But this is so, because they are both men of true genius—men receiving fully and richly the influence of the time to which they belonged, and also full of that germinative life which presses forward from the present into wonderful anticipations of the future. How true this was of Dante, even politically, it is hardly necessary that I should say. His political character only begins to be understood. He has written a work expressly on the subject of political power, which has been looked upon as strange, fanciful, fantastic to such a degree, that we have hardly thought of inquiring whether there be any wisdom in it. It is impossible that Dante should have seen all in regard to this question that has been shown us since; but it is wonderful how much he saw.

He was born a Guelph. His father was a Guelph, and he himself was called a Guelph in his early days—that is, he belonged to the democratic party in Italy. It is said he was a turncoat, that he was opposed by the Guelphs, and that he then went over to the Ghibellines. This is a low, narrow way of measuring thought, and is not at all applicable to Dante. He lived in the days when Charles of Anjou, Charles of Valois, and Philip le Bel showed that France, the ally of the Papacy, was more dangerous to the liberties of Europe than Imperial Germany ever had been. Was it consistent or inconsistent to say, “I do not care for the *name* of the oppressive foreign power; it is nothing to me whether that power

be kingly France or imperial Germany? I only say, Let Italy be for the Italians; I only say, Let neither French king nor German emperor oppress the Church and Italy, under the name of protecting them." And yet Dante was an imperialist in the loftiest conception we can form of that word. He dreamt—it was a dream in reference to his own age at least,—he dreamt of universal monarchy; he dreamt that God had directly conferred on the Romans, and the Roman empire as representing them, the right to claim universal obedience. Let us not wonder at this. Contemplate the frightful ages of strife immediately preceding his time, not only between the Italian communes, nor only between the empire and the Papacy, but within the Italian communes, rending every city, rending every family. Contemplate the nature of the man—a man made to feel all the misery of discord more intensely than any other man; and for that very reason, a man longing for peace, or at least expressing his longing for peace, with an intensity of utterance peculiar to himself. There is a traditional story which, I believe, I have told in this room before, but so long ago that it is the memory of the speaker only, and not that of the hearer, which can be expected to retain it. According to this traditional story, a knock was heard at the door of the monastery of the Lunigiano late one night, for admittance. The door was opened, and there was seen a weary-looking man, of whom it was asked, *Quid quæres*—what seekest thou? and the answer was, *Pacem*—peace. In the great poem of Dante, over and over again, he is described by himself or by his heaven-commissioned guide, in the different regions, as going

through them *cercando pace*—seeking for peace. I find, perhaps, a more touching instance of this habitual thought—this strongest of all his longings,—in so apparently remote a matter as his description of the Po, and of that particular spot in which that river by all its mouths pours itself into the Adriatic. He says, the river and its daughters flowed on *cercando pace*—seeking peace; and the Adriatic becomes to him for the moment an image of that eternity where alone that very fiery and sorely-tried nature could hope to find peace.

The dream of the universal monarchy I do not find so strange; and I know not that modern times are entitled to look with utter scorn upon it, at least from any absence of dreams now as wild or wilder, although, indeed, of an altogether different character.

To characterize the poetry of Dante, or to characterize the poet, I must not stop. Much illustration of him has come forth in our times. Every one talks of him, and there are some who really know and understand him. There have been several translations of his works; and among them, some of such remarkable merit at least as to appreciation of the special spirit of the original author; and there have been so many works relating to him, in Italy, in France, in England, and in Germany, that I should feel employed in something superfluous in adding a few transient words on the subject. But he belongs to the subject of my present lecture. He is the compend of the history of the middle age: how wonderfully, in that one small volume, is concentrated the past life of that period! In this, indeed, lies the true difficulty of reading Dante. There is so much of that life, and

especially as we approach the date of the poem itself, that a man to know Dante thoroughly must, we may say, know the whole mediæval period, and not on its surface and in its external events merely, but in its vital impulses, spiritual, political, and intellectual. One point in regard to Dante I may notice, as more frequently omitted. He had made himself, to a considerable extent, acquainted with classical literature, especially its poetry; whether he knew the Greek language has been made matter of question. I imagine he did not, or at least not so as to have anything like lively intercourse with its great authors. But the reverence with which he regards the Latin poets, the sort of inner revelations which he receives from them, is a feature so remarkable, that we ought to refer it to circumstances of a much deeper nature than the mere forms of his poetry. In truth, the forms of his poetry are anything but classical; but from the classics he learned that veneration, that enthusiasm for ancient Rome, which made him believe that the special mission of the Roman people on earth was just as little to be questioned as the authority of Christianity itself; though he was far from putting on the same level the spiritual and political life of man.

But I must turn from this mournful figure to a very different man, to the burly, good-natured, jolly Englishman, of the close of the fourteenth century, and the commencement of the fifteenth, the citizen of London, Geoffrey Chaucer. His face is familiar to all of us; as to his make, I should have thought it needless to say anything after what he said himself, had not commentators displayed their usual in-

genuity in perverting its meaning. The host, on the way to Canterbury, jests with Chaucer on his appearance. He says, "This man is shapen in the waist as well as I;" and he goes on to say that it is exactly the waist for a lady to embrace; on which certain commentators have remarked, that Chaucer was a small delicately-formed man, and they have referred to this passage in evidence. I don't know that anybody but a commentator could possibly have said this. But Geoffrey Chaucer is not complete without his waist, even though we have that good-natured, thoughtful, humorous face of his so well represented in a print, whose original source, I believe, to be the portrait of his painter, Occlene, who was a poet himself, and Chaucer's intimate acquaintance, on which, therefore, we may look as having good authority. Chaucer, like Dante, imbibed eagerly and with aptitude whatever the previous literature could give him. The Troubadour literature influenced him not directly, but through the Northern French, on the one hand, and through the Italian on the other. That he knew the Italian works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio is evident enough; that he had visited Italy, and was even sufficiently acquainted with the trading affairs of its commercial towns, to be employed in commercial missions is, I think, adequately proved. And having taken what that literature could give him, and elaborated it in imitation—for we have his tales from Boccaccio, and his stories from Petrarch, whether received from him orally or taken from anything in writing—having received, and in some measure transmitted the lights of the previous literature, what a various life besides the

man had led personally ! Familiarly acquainted with London life, as he has given better proof than any other man of the time, with even equal opportunities, could have given—knowing intimately the burgher life of all England—we find him next in the camp of Edward the Third, and the Black Prince ! We have on record a heraldic investigation as to whether certain arms were to be borne by Scroop or Grosvenor ; Geoffrey Chaucer is called as a witness, and he says, that *being in the camp with King Edward and the late Prince*, he remembered to have seen the said arms on a certain tent. Here you have the Troubadour story-teller of Boccaccio, the citizen of London, present in the most chivalrous and splendid camp of the most military leaders that Europe produced at the time ; and in his poetry you have all this embodied quite differently from the reflection of the previous ages as it appears in Dante. There is a living sympathy with it all ; it is the English dramatic humour beginning to show itself ; the same humour that was to be adequately represented once and for ever a century and a half afterwards in the writings of William Shakspeare.

I must truly say, in concluding this Lecture, that I feel more than even in commencing it, the doubt, whether in attempting such a subject, I have not undertaken too much. I have only to repeat my request for indulgence, in consideration of the largeness of the enterprise, and to remind you that my next Lecture, and the concluding one of the series, will be occupied with the subject of the Philosophical Literature of the Middle Ages.

LECTURE IV.

A HISTORY of the Philosophy of the Middle Ages! this is not what I undertake to give you in a single Lecture. Were I much more competent than I feel myself for such a task, it would be altogether impossible to compress the results of the study of that philosophy within such narrow limits. A History of the Literature of the Middle Ages, of which again the Philosophical Literature should form one portion, even this is more than I shall attempt. Some brief general views in regard to the characteristics, the tendencies and influences especially on modern development, which belong to the literature of the Middle Ages, this I have sought to give in my former Lectures, and the present will be but a continuation of an endeavour of the same sort. It is only in its relation to literature that I deal with philosophy. It would be altogether impossible to make myself intelligible without seeking to give some general notion of the philosophical characteristics of each of the great authors whom I shall have to name; but to discuss their philosophy is not my present province. They were, to a far greater extent than men are apt to acknowledge, co-operators in building the foundations of the great edifice of modern European

thought and literature; and to give you some general idea of the manner in which they accomplished this, will be all that I can now reasonably attempt.

The relations between every theology, on the one hand, and on the other hand, logic and metaphysics, are of the most intimate sort. I say theology: the individual man may worship and may act, under influences derived from his conception of the object of his worship, without forming a system; but the moment he becomes a professed or especially a professional thinker on the objects of his faith, he begins to systematize. This will be especially the case where there is an acknowledged written standard of the faith. As, for example (for I am now speaking of what is independent of the question of truth or falsehood), in the case of the Vedas, or in the case of the Koran, or in a case parallel in regard to the point to which I am now directing your attention—in the case of the studies of professional theologians, even in the early ages of the Christian Church, when directed to the Scriptures, and afterwards to the Scriptures conjointly with the works of the Fathers, and with the traditions of the Church—it was impossible but what necessities should arise for determining points which were only implicitly determined in the acknowledged standards; that is to say, the very words of the Sacred Book, or of the Fathers, did not bear upon the point immediately in question, whether of faith or of practice, except by inference and by implication; and then men would say, “We infer thus,” and the question would arise, “Do you infer correctly?” Thus there will come to be, as among the lawyers, acknowledged canons of inference and rules of inter-

pretation ; there will be an endeavour to collect these rules, to connect them rather into a system ; and thus side by side with your theology, you will very soon have a practical *art of logic*, a logic arising out of the wants of theologians, and specially adapted to their needs. And if the age be a speculative one, and the race a peculiarly speculative race, as in the East, where theology was mainly in the hands of the Greeks of the Asiatic side ; in these cases, the necessity for logic will go on with a rapidity proportioned to the acuteness and ingenuity of the disputants, and soon there will be a metaphysical system ; that is, the great objects of the faith will arrange themselves according to their relations, one to another : natural principles of reasoning will be called in, consciously or unconsciously, to determine in regard to those points that may have been left undetermined, or that may seem to have been left undetermined by the authoritative canon ; and thus, whether you call it by that name or no, you have very early a *scholastic theology*.

As to the genius and spirit of it, although the term is commonly applied rather to the West than to the East, we cannot but acknowledge that it manifested itself in greater intensity in the Eastern than in the Western Church. Many of the matters, if I should not indeed say all, which the great early Councils of the Eastern Church were called upon to decide were discussed, if they were not determined, in a spirit most intensely scholastic. The religious feeling seems, we should at first be tempted to say, to have been absent to a strange extent in the popular excitement about these matters. But it was not absent ; it was present in the form of a ferocious

fanaticism, which began with acknowledging the value of the faith in the sight of God, and ended with the belief, that whatever nice scholastic distinction they themselves might have instituted, had the whole weight of Divine authority in favour of its necessity for the soul of every individual man. Any of you, who may be interested in the demonstration of what I conceive to be a great point in the history of the Church, cannot do better than turn to the pages of Dean Milman. No one has so carefully collected the evidences of this intense, even popular excitement. If we say that even according to the description from which he has borrowed, the excitement was very mainly limited to the monastic orders, first of all it is not so; the mass of the populace of Alexandria, of Constantinople, of Ephesus, of Smyrna, partook in the *fury*, for we can call it nothing else; then, in the next place, if we *do* limit it to the monastic orders, you are to remember what a vast proportion of the mere numbers, and especially of the mental activity of all that region was concentrated within the monasteries:

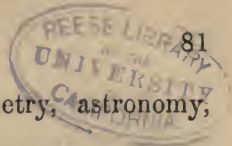
Now, what have we to do with this preliminary statement?—for I have hitherto avoided mainly what referred solely to the history of thought and literature in the East. We have thus much to do with it, that the Western intellect seemed at first to be altogether alien to this kind of speculation. There was a taste, a relish for simplicity. There was an impulse towards practical life which very soon changed the character even of monasticism when it came westward, and made each monastery to be a great workhouse, only that the work included the finest arts and the highest studies of the time, as well as the mere manual labour

which was at first mainly attended to. But for a long time the Popes and professed theologians of the Western Church seemed to prefer abstaining from what I have already by anticipation called the *scholastic* discussion of great theological questions.

There was, however, at the head, we may say, during his own age, of the Western Church, a man who had the highest and the maturest culture of the Eastern philosophy and literature, along with a profound faith and a profound study of Christianity. Ambrose and Justin and Jerome, in the fourth century, are among the four greatest names in the history of the Western Church ; but in permanent influence on the mind of the world, and of Christianity, they are hardly to be named, I believe, along with St. Augustin ; and it is of him that I speak. In his works the West had, therefore, stores of religious philosophy, however different in character from the dialectic metaphysics of the East. The next, indeed the only one who is added to that list, as though on an equal level, I mean Gregory the Great, to whom the Anglo-Saxon Church owed its first conversion, is himself so devoted a student of Augustin, and his own influence in the West was so profound and so lasting, that he conduced not a little to establish Augustin permanently in the place to which I have referred. I do not go into any details as to the philosophical training of this Father. His Platonism, his Manichæism, his philosophical study of the Pelagian doctrines, the effort to get up an antagonistic philosophy, which should form a sort of outer wall for Christianity, withstanding the efforts of the Oriental Manichæism on the one hand, and on the other

hand, of the Occidental Pelagianism ; these are things known and hardly belonging to the subject of this evening, farther than this, that for a long time the greatest influence in the Western Church, at once theological and philosophical, is the influence of Augustin.

In the very century of Gregory the Great, although earlier considerably than the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons of Kent,—in the very century of Gregory the Great, died another writer whose influence on our Western world seems harder to account for to a modern who turns his attention to his works, than in the case of Augustin. Men of letters, mere philosophers, feel an attraction to the works of Augustin, which would be enough to account for the power that they retain, even apart from the depth of his piety and the strength of his faith. Different is the case with Boethius, who is sometimes called the last of the classics. Christianity, even in his most popular book, his *Consolations of Philosophy*, occupies no conspicuous place ; he does not discuss its doctrines, and yet it is to be believed that his influence over the Western Church, especially in our own land, and in the countries which I have showed you were so greatly influenced by Anglo-Saxon England, was hardly less for centuries than that of Augustin himself. If we look at its derivative effects, it would be hardly too much to say that it was greater. Boethius wrote on logic ; he discussed the training of the mind for philosophy ; he laid down, I do not know that I am quite entitled to say *first* in the Western world, but he did lay down the long celebrated *quadrivium*, to which I will direct your attention for a moment or two ; we should call it at first sight pure and



applied science, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music.

But if we examine a little more closely we shall find that of the physics of astronomy the people of that time knew absolutely nothing, and that of the physics of music they knew quite as little; so that we have for pure science,—for merely *formal* science,—arithmetic and geometry; and then, again, music and astronomy are still purely *formal*. Astronomy, as any one may easily satisfy himself—for example, by reference to the history of the inductive sciences by Dr. Whewell,—astronomy during the whole ante-Copernican period is a formal science, and formal only.

Now, the missionaries to the Anglo-Saxons sent forth by Gregory, brought with them a large ecclesiastical library; Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and, soon after, Gregory himself, were added to the list of the most venerated theological authors. But in the next century they brought with them a considerable scientific library, according to the notions of these times; and in that library a very conspicuous place is held by the writings of Boethius. I beg your attention to this circumstance. These rude, vigorous minds—that Gothic mind which had so long lain fallow—is brought rapidly into connexion with a world of new impressions, with historical, and, above all, theological materials. It feels the overwhelming confusion of the attempt to deal with these; it seeks for order, it seeks for some power of order within itself; it devotes itself to the formal sciences. To the *quadrivium* which I have described to you, and these studies as a foundation for this capacity of

mental order which were, you know, so highly appreciated in the highest of the ancient Grecian schools,—to the *quadrivium* were very soon added the studies of the *trivium*, that is, logic, rhetoric, and grammar : in other words, the formal studies of the acts of the mind ; *formal* science still ; only, the formal science now of *laws of thought*, and *laws of the utterance of thought*.

The influence of these studies is, at first, mainly or almost altogether in the West, the influence of Boethius. I am now anticipating ; but after a short time a mightier influence still comes from a different and altogether unexpected quarter : the *master* of Boethius comes to be, in some measure, known. Through the Saracens, and still more through the Jews of Spain, and afterwards through the Saracens and the Jews of the East, the works of Aristotle become known, at least through commentators, and then again through translations of translations ; and I cannot doubt at all that the Western intellect was prodigiously whetted by the effort to make out what so great a genius intended by doctrines presented in often so obscure and corrupted a form ; for the Syrian of Bagdad did not always understand the Greek, and the Latin, who translated from the Syrian, did not always understand the Syrian ; and the result may be imagined ;—with absolute faith in the teacher, there was an effort always to make out something worthy of his powers in that which was presented, frequently in a corrupted state. But, as I have said, this is anticipation.

A product of the Anglo-Saxon school—of the theological and classical studies, and also of the studies of

the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* in the best schools of England—went, as I showed you in a former lecture, to be the Minister for Education of Charlemagne ; I refer to Alcuin. Those who speak most slightly of Alcuin, as to his original or productive genius, confess the completeness of his acquisitions according to the standard of that time. He was a man capable of *learning*, and then again, having learned, he was a man capable of *teaching* ; he was, in short, very efficient for the very important office into which he was thus thrown.

We have now arrived at the explanation of the manner in which Western Europe came to be prepared for the possibility of a philosophical application of mind to the theological studies which were then the main interest of human thought. From that time forward, in England, in France, and in Germany, the names, at least, of Plato and Aristotle became familiar ; and we have full reason to believe that the original writings of at least one of these philosophers were known to Alcuin, as to his predecessors in England, who had been the disciples of Theodore and Adrian. But we have not yet arrived at anything that is generally understood by the name of the scholastic or mediæval philosophy. We have still men trying, as Boethius might have done in the sixth century, to harmonize intellect and faith, to infer rightly according to logical laws,—to reconcile the system of spiritual truth presented to faith by the Scriptures and by the Church, with the impressions in regard to spiritual things presented to our natural faculties from any other sources. System could hardly be said as yet to have developed

itself in the West ; and yet very soon, and by an influence once more derived from this island (though from a different race than that to which Alcuin belonged), the grandson of Charlemagne, Charles the Bald, maintained the interest in theological, literary, and scientific matters, by which his grandfather had been so powerfully actuated in the intervals of his laborious life. In consequence of this, he also had a native of this island—I mean of these two islands—a familiar inmate of his house : as to his birthplace, it used to be the fashion, in this country at least, to think that Johannes Scotus Erigena was a native of the town of Ayr. This, I believe, is now considered a misinterpretation of his name, and it is hardly now doubted that it means a native of Erin, of Ireland : the name “Scotus” would have been indifferently applied to the Celtic race, whether in the northern part of Great Britain, or in the neighbouring island, and for distinction’s sake “Erigena” appears to have been added ; while his personal name, the only name a man in those ages was entitled to, was Johannes, requiring, therefore, some distinction.

We should, perhaps, have known little of any original speculations of Scotus Erigena on the matters now before us, had it not been for an accusation of heresy brought against a certain monk whose name is more remembered, I believe, than the history of his opinions. Godeschalchus, who was accused of what would very nearly approach to what we call ultra-Calvinism, including reprobationism, including Divine decrees of individual human crime, and individual human punishment. He was an ultra-Augustinian, he pushed the principle of

Augustin, in regard to predestination and election, to results from which that Father appears to have shrunk. The ruling ecclesiastics of that time in France, which continued much under the influence introduced by Boniface and Alcuin from this country, and had a far higher theological and intellectual character, indeed, than belonged to the centuries preceding,—the ruling ecclesiastics of that country considered Scotus as the proper champion of orthodoxy to call in. His reputation for philosophical acumen was so high, that up to this time he seems to have been allowed, unquestioned, to broach opinions, which in a man less wondered at and revered, would have shocked the general ear. It is in reply to Godeschalk that he expresses views which are indeed evidently antagonistic to the first principles of the other, and which yet remarkably led to conclusions coinciding with what is most questionable in them. If Godeschalk has been accused of fatalism, Erigena has been accused first of mysticism and then of pantheism; and when I say they coincide in their worst results, if you push their logic to its consequences, I mean to say that the responsibility of the individual man is as truly taken away by representing the Divine as the only substantial, the only real Being, in which all other being is included, and of which any other being is a mere manifestation, as if you completely (with Godeschalk) *separate* the Creator and the creature, indeed, but then represent everything done by the creature, or befalling him, as the simple result of a predetermined purpose of his Maker. It is a curious instance, but one that often occurs, of the way in which extremes meet. A late

very able writer, although perhaps not to be suspected of having too much addicted himself to philosophical studies, has said that pure Epicureanism and pure Stoicism ultimately entirely coincide. It is not, practically speaking, so untrue ; it is a paradox of the same nature with that which is here before us. And yet, however it may have been with Godeschalk, a man evidently of a hard, narrow intellect, I do not believe that Scotus Erigena is justly to be accused of intending the conclusions to which his arguments were pushed by others. He was evidently a man of profoundly contemplative habits. The charge of mysticism is well founded, whether it be considered a reproach or the reverse. He felt himself always in the presence of the Supreme ; he felt that that presence was to be discerned by an organ of the soul ; he felt that it was to be discerned *in all things*, and that the true view under which any limited object before us was to be regarded, was but as a manifestation of the one infinite source of all. So far we may find little to reproach him with on account of its practical results. But you can easily see how such views of things might pass into those of which he was accused by others.

I have dwelt the longer on these two names, one of which is but little known, and the other not much more, because of the antagonism, from the first, in which two great schools of thinking appeared, here in our Western world. Godeschalk represents the logical intellect ; Erigena the contemplative or intuitive power of the mind. Each of them pushes principles to extremes, and to the conclusions to which his natural tendency led him. I may mention that

Erigena was the translator of the works ascribed to Dionysius, the Areopagite, as he was called, according to the traditions of the Church at that time,—writings in which mysticism displays itself in full force, and which, from his time forward, had the greatest influence in Western Europe—an influence of which they had hitherto been deprived by the language in which they were couched. But this was an age incapable of such development as should permanently or at all directly affect the literature which has since been developed out of the mediæval.

I pass on to another great name belonging, once more, but in quite a different way, to our island. Two Frenchmen have spoken in reference to the history of literature and philosophy in a very different manner. M. Cousin—it is now a good many years ago, and perhaps he smiles now at his own—flippancy shall I call it?—in speaking of the idea of the English, that our land has had considerable influence on the history of philosophy and literature,—begins a paragraph with these words, “Britain is no doubt a very considerable island, but”—and then he goes on to say, that, notwithstanding its being a very considerable island, it really has had very little to do with the things he is immediately to consider. Guizot, knowing England better, and thinking with more balance of the subject which came before him, has spoken more truly. He says, The characteristic of Europe, as compared with the ancient classical civilisation, is *its combination of extremes*; and then he adds, “*and Britain is the Europe of Europe.*” This I believe to be a juster representation of matters.

In virtue of this, then, we have had belonging to us, as the growth of the island, Alcuin ; we have had belonging to us, as the growth of the islands, and of one of the great races between which it is divided, Scotus Erigena ; and now we have a foreigner returned to us from the Continent, as it were, in acknowledgment of what we had done for them. Anselm of Canterbury, who, in the close of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth century, occupies a place more analogous, in the history of the Church and of philosophy, to that of Augustin than any one in the space between them. He, too, is a man of a contemplative mind ; beginning, as such men do, with a desire to have a living contemplation of religious objects, he has tendencies that would have led him in the same course with Erigena ; on the other hand, the logical faculty is much more cultivated and developed in him. The analogy of many of his speculations with Platonism on the one hand, and then again with some of the so-called *a priori* doctrines of modern schools, is very striking, and has often been remarked. I will only notice, for example, in his treatise on the essence of the Divinity, an inquiry, Whether a good action has merely goodness for one of many properties, or whether the goodness in this and that and another good action is one and the same thing, present in all ? He comes to the conclusion, as a Platonist would have done, that it is one and the same thing ; and proceeding upwards, he asks, What is this thing, pervading a variety of good actions, of good men, of whatever *is* good ? Where has it a real existence, as we are compelled to acknowledge that it has somewhere ?

The final answer to the question is, "It has a real existence in God—the good; that which is absolutely and essentially *good* is identical with the Supreme Being." He rises by these steps: That Good *is*; then, that Good is *perfect*; then, finally, that Good is *one*: What is that *one perfect Good*? It is GOD. You will see even from this very imperfect manner of illustration, the analogies I have pointed out; and you will see also how such speculations, with a less cautious and a less highly cultivated intellect, might have finally led him to the same mystic Pantheism of which Erigena was accused. A very impressive work of Anselm's,—I think mainly on account of that characteristic of the contemplative mind which I referred to, namely, the constant desire that the contemplation should be *living*, that it should be a *real* dealing with the spiritual object, and not a mere *thinking about it* in its absence,—is his so-called Proslogion or address—address, that means, to God. It is like the *Confessions* of St. Augustin, an address to God throughout; it is, like that beautiful work, a frank and open *thinking before God* in all its parts; in it also we find him going from question to question, speaking as though he were addressing an oracle and waiting an answer, and then proceeding from the answer to another question. We find the same principle which I spoke of in his former work taking yet another form. He makes a similar inquiry in regard to *Truth*, Whether there be any Truth in any other sense than mere actual existence? He infers, according to the Platonic tendency of his mind, that there is; and by the same steps as formerly, in the case of the Good, he arrives at the conclusion that there

is a substantial Truth, and that the one substantial Truth must be GOD.

These men were pursuing thought freely; they did not determine to have a system; they did not lay down the universal law to themselves, of explaining and harmonizing to the intellect everything that they believed; the natural and the acquired impulses of the human mind worked in them; they wanted to understand naturally, as they could; and as the demand in regard to this and that individual question arose, and was felt, they pursued it; and in the case of minds like Anselm's, they pursued it far. The obligations of Leibnitz and of Clarke to Anselm have often been referred to; in the later studies of Germany on similar subjects, his name and his thoughts are often met with.

I proceed, however, to that age in which the scholastic philosophy, properly so called, was heralded by minds of a very different quality indeed from those of which we have spoken. Anselm died early in the eleventh century; to the twelfth century belongs the name of Peter Abelard. Abelard, like Scotus Erigena before him, and like Johannes Duns Scotus after him, was of a Celtic race. He was a Breton of France. He himself seems conscious of something peculiar in his temperament; it is not what we now associate with the Breton temperament that he ascribes to himself. He speaks of exceeding lightness, impulsiveness, facility, readiness to receive impressions, and very rapid fertility in originating thought, in evasion, and in reply to new difficulties. He is a man of whom it is hard to speak, on account of his personal history, on account of his personal

character, on account of the relations into which he was brought with the orthodoxy of his age ; but I must not avoid the subject which stands so right on my road. Peter Abelard seems to have been one of some few men prominent in all history, whose grand temptation was *exuberance of power* ; he tried nothing that he could not do ; he tried *nothing* literally, that he did not do better than any one of his age. What the temptations of such men are, it is not easy for those of a less large endowment to judge of ; the result often appears to be tyranny, despotism, a feeling that because they *can* do everything or anything, they *may* do everything and anything. The vices and crimes with which, by his own candid and simple confession, Abelard is convicted, are *great, fearful* ; the sufferings they entailed on him were *great and fearful too*. I accept with all my heart, and without one moment's question of its entire sincerity and genuineness, the testimony of the venerable Peter of Clugni, in whose monastery he spent the last years of his life, as to the truth of his penitence, as to the genuineness of his humility, as to the ready serviceableness of his life, as to his devotion according to the standard of a man acknowledged to be pious among the foremost of that pious age, the friend, although he was often the opponent, of Bernard of Clairvaux.

But our business is with Abelard as a philosopher. Now, we shall not understand him there, unless we see that in the early period of his history he yields to the same temptations to which we find him exposed in other directions. He heard much controversy going on. Scholasticism was not

formed yet, but theology was eager and loud and busy all over France, all over Western Europe. Theology, as we have shown, especially when you have a vast number of professional men dedicated to it, must be logical and metaphysical in spite of itself. He went to study under the great logical theologian of that day—William of Champeaux—at Paris; and in the collision between these two was brought into distinct light the grand difference between two distinct schools of thinkers to which I have already adverted. Abelard rushed into the conflict from exuberance of power. His father had been a knight, famous for his skill in jousts and tournaments; and never did his father rush at knight with greater determination to unhorse him than he did at William of Champeaux, or any one else who seemed to venture within the lists. William, a man of great reputation at that time, maintained, in one of his lectures, when Abelard was a hearer, the doctrine of Realism in its strongest form. Now-a-days Realism is generally understood to be a strong sense of reality, a strong sense of anything that is real. But in these days it had a meaning very different: it meant a ready acceptance of something which, according to our perception and experience, has no reality at all. In short, the position maintained by William of Champeaux was this, that the same whole thing is actually contained—is actually present—in whatever is comprehended under it; that the same whole thing is actually—*essentially* was the word—is essentially present in everything comprehended under it: for example, Peter is a man, William is a man; well, the same reality, viz.,

man, is present in Peter and in William ; and that is as much a reality as whatever distinguishes Peter from William ; or, let us take the whole audience of William of Champeaux's lectures : This and that and the other is a man ;—well, they are all comprehended under this general term, man ; the same entire object of thought, viz., man, is actually contained as a reality in each one of them, and so you go on extending till at last in the whole human race you have one same whole thing *essentially contained*, according to William of Champeaux's language. Peter Abelard, with the zest of a practised jousting, describes how he—excuse a vulgar word, but there is something vulgar enough in his bearing to justify it—he describes how he capsized this old William of Champeaux in sight of all his pupils, and how William, sorely bruised, was obliged to get up and acknowledge that the same whole thing was not *essentially* present, but only *indifferently* present. These things appear frivolities ; they show that the matter had at least stretched itself away into very minute ramifications. And yet a great question lay there,—a question which was not set at rest by the prodigious scholastic activity of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries ; of which, indeed, we must say it has not altogether been set at rest yet. It is, however, in reference chiefly to the development and the form of activity of Abelard's mind that I refer to this controversy.

After having driven poor William of Champeaux out of Paris, and obliged him to yield his place in the lists to his pupil,—after having encountered this pupil too, Abelard heard of a theologian quite as famous for his intellectual powers in that department as William

was, in the philosophy applied to theology in those days. He heard of one Anselm, and, like a certain creature at the sight of scarlet, he rushes from Paris to Laon, in order to become a disciple of Anselm, for the purpose of showing that Anselm had as little chance before the point of his intellectual lance as poor William of Champeaux had. Accordingly, him also he demolishes and reduces to silence and to shame before his pupils; and so he goes on triumphing. But, let me say, all this is described with as true a contempt by Abelard himself, as it could be described by any other man. After he has been driven inwards, after he has begun to think of realities, in a better sense than even that of the Realists, he sees how paltry a thing was this anxiety to test the measure of his mere skill at fence.

Now came the shame and the sorrow of that story with which his name is so intimately associated, and which, again, I ascribe in no small measure to that exuberance of power which was a temptation to despotize over whatever he was brought in contact with. After this period it was that he became an inmate of the Abbey of St. Denis, and during the short time he remained there, the testimony to his behaviour is quite in keeping with the testimony to his maturer character afterwards borne by Peter of Clugni. Then it was that he inhabited that private cell belonging to the monastery, some characteristic quarrel having arisen between him and the monks; I say a *characteristic* quarrel, for Abelard had discovered, what everybody now knows, that the St. Denis of the Abbey was not Dionysius the Areopagite, and had not the discretion to hold his tongue about the matter,

and, therefore, it was impossible for him to remain longer under the roof. When in his private cell, young men, clerks, who were studying theology and philosophy according to the notion of the times, flocked in upon him from all quarters. They addressed him in words which I must read to you, because they appear to me very critical in the whole history of thought in the Christian Church; the expression as he himself quotes it, that was frequently in their mouths on this occasion was—"Nec credi posse aliquid nisi primitus intellectum; et ridiculosum esse aliquem aliis prædicare, quod nec ipse, nec illi quos doceret, intellectu capere [possint];" that is, "that nothing can be really believed, unless, in the first place, it be apprehended by the intelligence, and that it is ridiculous to teach anything to other men which neither he who teaches, nor those whom he teaches, have thus intellectually apprehended." I believe that that which was felt by these pupils on the one hand, and that which was responded to by Abelard on the other, was the ground of the persecution which he afterwards underwent from the best and foremost men of his time. I do not mean to say that it was the very words that I have now quoted that occasioned it. But there was a want stirring in men's minds, which expressed itself—not by these three lines of Latin, but by their rushing to that solitary cell of St. Denis in the first place, and which afterwards expressed itself on a far greater scale in the most wonderful part of the history of Abelard, in the history of the Paraclete. I will read to you the commentary of Milman on this matter:—"His enemies urged the bishop of the province to interdict his

lectures, as tainted with secular learning, unbecoming a monk. His disciples, with more dangerous adulation, demanded of the great teacher the satisfaction of their reason on the highest points of theology, which they could no longer receive in simple faith. They would no longer be blind leaders of the blind, nor pretend to believe what they did not clearly comprehend." Now, that that *was* dangerous adulation indeed—if it had meant what Milman, whose sincerity in his representation of the matter is beyond all suspicion or question, says it meant—is not to be doubted for a moment. If they meant to say that those objects which had hitherto been objects of simple faith are objects in regard to which our reason must be satisfied,—if they meant to say, "What I am to profess and believe I must clearly *comprehend*," then, no doubt, it was dangerous adulation to claim such instruction from any man then living, or from any man that has ever lived. But was this so? First of all, what is "*intellectu capere*"—to receive into the intellect? In the next place, what is the meaning of their refusal to be driven to say that they believed anything till they received it into their intellect? The intelligence—*intellectus*—is used, not for the mere ratiocinative faculty, but for the whole *seeing power* of the spirit of man. The meaning of the dread of these young men appears to me to have been this,—“ I will not think I am safe because there are certain words concerning which I believe that they express a great truth, if to my own soul it be altogether an insoluble question what that truth is.” They meant to say, that if mere words will not do it, neither will mere relation to the understanding do it.

They meant to say, if I understand them aright, the very reverse of what is imputed to them. "You speak of God, of eternity, of incarnation. You say these are supreme truths," I conceive one of these poor young clerks might say to Abelard. "Well, then, they are, I do not doubt it; but what the Church, what the Bible gives as the utterance of truth, to me is as yet only a word. What may it be more? It may be something more. To me it is only a word standing for an unknown quantity: its relations I know, but then I know not what it is in itself. It is a theological *x y z*. I see how it stands in the system, and in relation to other assumed or known truths, but what it *is*, I do not know; therefore, if I say, 'I believe it,' I utter an untruth. Can you help me? Can you deliver me?" These I understand to have been the questions put to Abelard. He had gone through a severe training by this time. I do not say that that proud spirit was thoroughly subdued; I do not say he was beyond the temptations of intellectual ambition; but greatly humbled he was, and I believe he would not have rushed into new difficulties and dangers, without the feeling that it was a reasonable requirement that these men addressed to him, and that if he were in any way capable of helping them out of their difficulties there was an obligation on him to attempt it.

I do not believe I am over-rating the importance of this man in the history of intellectual philosophy, and therefore I have dwelt on him so long. I have referred to what afterwards happened, when, retiring from St. Denis—as he had over and over again gone from the places where his popularity was at its

height,—he went to a remote part of France, to an absolute desert, according to the description of the writers of the time, and there inhabited a solitary cell. One cell after another was built around it, cottages or huts rather, of the rudest kind ; a sort of Crimean encampment or bivouac was made there by multitudes of men with the same eager thirst for knowledge that brought them to St. Denis. Men of all ranks rushed in upon him. Was that disgraceful to the age ? They may have sought to drink at a fountain very incapable of quenching the thirst by which they were actuated ; but it was a noble thirst. It was the desire to exercise—and to have satisfied—faculties which had been bestowed on them, and the gift of which was a warrant for their exercise.

It may seem as though the portico were to be enormous, and the building very small, when I tell you that, strictly speaking, we have not arrived at scholasticism yet. But a very few words will dispose of what I have now to say in regard to it. The thirteenth century is the age of the great scholastics—there is no doubt of that. We all know that Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, that Bonaventure and Duns Scotus, are among the highest names in that region of thought. But there is the less reason that we should detain ourselves, in a sketch like this, on that period, for causes which I hope to make clear to you in the few sentences that remain. Abelard speaks always as though his intellectual activity were a thing outside of the Church, and as though it belonged rather to the secular life,—as though conscious that however honestly he is

engaged in it, and however honest his utterances may appear to himself, still he was not employed in the proper business of a monk,—in the proper business of a religious man. And this, remember, is not only during the earlier period of his life when he acknowledges the vanity and ambition by which he was actuated, but during that later and more sober period, preceding at least the great Council of Sens, where Bernard, the great contemplative genius of the Church of that age, encountered him, and procured sentence against him unheard, (not by the fault of Bernard, for Abelard refused to appear;) and then again, Abelard's appeal to the Pope is set aside, and he takes refuge, as I have described to you, in the Abbey of Clugni, under Peter the venerable, where he ends his days.

But this closes a period during which philosophy had no acknowledged place in the system of the Church. It is altogether otherwise after this. The thirteenth century—a marvellous central period in the history of Europe—is distinguished, among many things by which it is distinguished, by the rise of the mendicant orders. It is the century when great laymen began to appear, and with quite a laic character. A great layman was St. Louis of France, if I had time to vindicate that description of him: a great layman, Dante, belongs by birth to the latter half of this century also. But it is the century of Dominic and of Francis, and their relation to philosophy and literature is of the most important and intimate kind. *They take philosophy into the Church;* it becomes part of the ecclesiastical system. Its doctrines, its system, are, within certain limits, com-

pletely recognised as a portion of service done to the cause of Christian truth ; and much that is achieved by other means is even accepted into the standard of the faith. The founders of these two great orders were men exceedingly different. Dominic was a man of great capacity both of thought and of action ; taking a journey through Languedoc he found the secular clergy of that region trying to win over the heretics by mere authority or compulsion ; he showed them that poverty, that devotedness, that self-denial, were, in the first place, the proper means to recover the unbelievers : and this man was the founder of that order with which the whole history of the inquisition, especially in its beginning, is so intimately associated. But in regard to our subject, the history of the Dominicans of the thirteenth century is one of the most interesting portions of literary history. The fruits of the labours of Abelard, and the like men, were showing themselves in Paris especially, which was the great seat of learning at that time. The mental activity which inquired at first " what we were to believe in accordance with the faith," soon turned to inquire what we were to believe, without scrupulous regard to whether it was in accordance with the faith or no. The rage for speculation went to a height to which, perhaps, nothing in more recent history is comparable, unless it were that generated by the writings of Kant in Germany in the close of the last century. In this state of things the Dominican order resolved to become missionaries of a new kind, apostles of a new sort. They were to go among those men inhabiting an intellectual region, foreign to the Church ;

to make converts there by the means adapted for their conversion ;—they educated themselves to the office of preaching, but, in the first instance, to the office of preaching to the learned ;—they went to all the great universities, to Oxford, Paris, Bologna, and everywhere encountered the greatest thinkers, met them with their own weapons, but still always bearing in view the faith and the practical religious life, as they conceived it, as the end to be chiefly contemplated. The results were wonderful : in many instances there were conversions, humiliations, shame, and remorse acknowledged with regard to the past life. But I have referred to this circumstance because it will explain to you how a new intensity, and, at the same time, a new harmony, was sure to be given to the scholastic theology by this complete recognition of it as a portion of the ecclesiastical system. Very soon the formal acceptance of the two orders—the Dominican and Franciscan—by the Pope, that is, by the Church, consecrated all that had been done. The whole scholastic history of the thirteenth century is mainly the history of their activity. I will merely name to you Albertus Magnus, the German representative of the Germanic intellect of that period, regarded as one of the highest among the scholastic theologians of the Dominican order. Of that order was also Thomas Aquinas, who is considered as an anti-Realist on this ground, that he maintains that ideas—I must not stop to explain the Platonic use of the expression—have not a *real* existence in themselves, but that their real existence is in the mind of God alone, and that out of it they are no realities ; that they are not, as William of Cham-

peaux held, *in the individual things where they are represented*. Bonaventure, the Seraphic Doctor, as he was called, is, in a corresponding manner, characteristic of the Franciscan order. Perhaps the most acute and original, during his own period, of all these speculators, and one, at the same time, entirely orthodox, is the last I shall name to you, Johannes Duns Scotus, who was born in the year 1307, which will give you some general indication of the period to which I refer. He prolongs the history of the great scholastics of the thirteenth century far on into the fourteenth. In regard to these great men—for men of most comprehensive intellects they were, of prodigious subtlety some of them, and others of them of the very loftiest aspirations.—I will only remind you that the great work of Aquinas is his *Sum of Theology*, where there is hardly any question, moral or philosophical, on which principles deduced from religion can be brought to bear, that is not included, and where the subjects directly and obviously included under its title are dealt with, with a free and at the same time an exceedingly delicate hand; while the title of the great work of Bonaventure, *Of the Reduction of all the Arts to Theology*, shows the grand ambition of the spiritual intellectualists of that time.

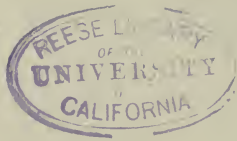
And here I have finished what is purely and properly characteristic of the mediæval philosophy in regard to its literary history. WHAT DID THESE MEN FOR US? To answer that question would be a prodigious undertaking; but I think it can hardly be doubted by those who have paid even a very slight attention to the subject which I have this

evening presented to you, that we speak and think differently every day of our lives, in consequence of the cultivation given to formal thought as applied to the highest subjects, and in consequence, especially, of the cultivation given to language as the organ of that formal thought, by the class of men who have been so hastily passing in review before us. I felt that any reference to the history of literature during the mediæval period would be exceedingly incomplete without some endeavour to explain the nature of these specific influences.

I am now about to take leave of you. I have certainly long enough detained you on a subject so far out of the common range. If it has at all interested you, there are two authors to whom I can refer you very confidently for further satisfaction. The very unpretending little volume of Mr. Maurice on the Mediæval Philosophy is, perhaps, strange to say, the most popularly written of all his works, although on a subject apparently so unfitted for popularity. Dr. Milman, whom I have had occasion so frequently to acknowledge as an aid and a guide, has paid a commendable attention to the history of philosophy throughout all the periods embraced in his history of Latin Christianity. From the nature of my subject, and from the narrowness of my limits, I have had often to request your indulgence. I am very conscious of the measure in which I have experienced it. On the other hand, I should have had no right to come before you, unless I had hoped I might afford aid to some of you who were interested in inquiries as to the past intellectual life of Europe,

and who might see that the mental activity of that period was not altogether without capacity for guidance of the present. If I have in any measure succeeded in communicating this, my labour has had its best reward.





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