

PAGANISM
IN
EDUCATION

from the French

OF

Le Ver Rongeur des Sociétés Modernes
(The Canker-Worm of Modern Societies)

by the

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CONTENTS

Letter from His Eminence Cardinal Gousset, Archbishop of Rheims to the Abbé Gaume	iii
Introduction	v

I. Position of the Problem	1
II. Examination of the Problem	3
III. Solution of the Problem.....	7
IV. First Objection answered. — History of the Classic Books: First Epoch	12
V. Continuation	23
VI. Second Epoch	28
VII. Third Epoch	42
VIII. Second Objection answered. — Testimony of Men.....	45
IX. Continuation	50
X. Testimony of Facts. — Influence of Pagan Classics on Literature	56
XI. Continuation	61
XII. Influence of Pagan Classics on Language	74
XIII. Influence of Pagan Classics on the Arts	81
XIV. Continuation	86
XV. Influence of Pagan Classics on Philosophy	92
XVI. Continuation	97
XVII. Influence of Pagan Classics on the Sciences	103
XVIII. Continuation	107
XIX. Influence of Pagan Classics on Religion.....	113
XX. Continuation	117
XXI. Influence of Pagan Classics on the Family	125

P A G A N I S M I N E D U C A T I O N

XXII. Continuation..... 130

XXIII. Influence of Classic Paganism on Society 136

 XIV. Continuation..... 143

 XV. Continuation..... 149

 XVI. Necessity of Christian Classics. — Objections answered157

 XVII. Continuation..... 168

 XVIII. Objections answered.177

 XIX. Plan for a Christian Classic Library..... 183

 XX. Particular Advantages of this Library 189

LETTER
FROM
HIS EMINENCE
CARDINAL GOUSSET,
ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS,
TO THE
ABBÉ GAUME,
Vicar-General to his Lordship the Bishop of Nevers.

MONSIEUR THE VICAR-GENERAL, — I have seen the proofs of the book you propose publishing under the title of *Le Ver Rongeur des Sociétés Modernes; ou, Le Paganisme dans l'Education*. The reading of this work has deeply interested me, from the manner in which you have treated questions of the highest importance. It seems to me that you have clearly shown that the almost exclusive use of pagan authors in secondary schools, for several centuries, has exercised a fatal influence on the education of youth and on the spirit of modern societies. Hence the friends of religion and of social order will easily understand, as you yourself have understood, the necessity of modifying, in the establishments of public instruction, the direction of those studies which relate to the classic authors, so as to make the Christian Latin and Greek authors predominate, since their writings are so well calculated to incite young people to the practice of the evangelical virtues, and to re-establish the constitutive principles of society in all their vigor. This idea may meet with contradiction; but I have reason to hope that, sooner or later, your work will be attended with happy results, and I cannot but congratulate you on its publication.

Receive, Monsieur the Vicar-General, the expression of my devoted and affectionate sentiments.

✠ **T. CARDINAL GOUSSET,**
Archbishop of Rheims.

Paris, 20th June, 1851.

INTRODUCTION.

How does the physician treat the sick man struggling with a disease which momentarily threatens to precipitate him into the tomb? If he is not blind or culpable, his first care is to have recourse, not to palliatives, not to ordinary remedies, but to fly to the last resources of his art to bring about a salutary crisis; if necessary, he has recourse to the knife or cautery, in spite of the cries and the resistance of the patient.

Society is sick; very sick. Symptoms more and more alarming no longer permit us to doubt the gravity of the evil. Are palliatives or the ordinary remedies sufficient to ward off inevitable death? No. Such is your opinion, such is also mine. Some energetic remedy is then necessary. A complete revolution must be brought about, and that, too, quickly, for time presses; every hour's delay may become fatal.

But where is the seat of the evil? Now, more than ever, it is in the soul; and the soul is not healed by laws, but by good morals; and they are the result of education. Education does not influence mature age, but childhood. This, you will say, is a slow remedy, and one which has become at the present time powerless. It is true that we write under the howling of the tempest. To all appearance the thunder will have burst before the lightning rod shall have discharged the cloud. But the tempest will pass, and a source from which childhood may draw pure truth must be opened upon the ravaged soil, or on the morrow of the hurricane, a new one will prepare. Admit, as you suppose, that the entire edifice cannot be preserved; apply the cautery, let those who must suffer, suffer. If the present is condemned, let us save the future. Upon this point all our efforts should be concentrated; there must be brought about the revolution which alone can snatch the patient from death.

Many speak of this revolution, but few understand it; many have attempted it, but none have succeeded. I will endeavor to explain why, in pointing out what it ought to be.

In these latter times people have been much occupied about liberty of instruction; it has been demanded with earnestness, with perseverance,

as a necessity, and as a right. Honor to the courage, honor to the talent that has been so nobly consecrated to the success of this great cause! Important as it is, the question of liberty is commanded by another still more important. Liberty is not the end; it is but a means. The capital point is not to make instruction free, but to make it Christian. Otherwise this liberty would but increase the number of poisoned sources from which childhood would drink the deadly draught.

To make instruction Christian is the object of the struggle; this is what must be sought after, must be realized at any cost.

We must substitute Christianity for paganism in education, — we must renew the chain of Catholic teaching, which it is evident was sacrilegiously and unfortunately broken throughout Europe four centuries ago. We must place the pure source of truth near the cradle of the new-born generations, instead of the impure cistern of error; spiritualism, instead of sensualism; order, instead of disorder; life, instead of death.

We must impregnate anew our literature, our arts and sciences, our customs and institutions, with the Catholic principle, to purge them from the shameful diseases that devour them, to release them from the slavery under which they groan.

We must thus save society, if it is not already too late; or at least we must prevent all from perishing in the frightful deluge that threatens us.

We must thus second the manifest designs of Providence, either in tempering the steel that must sustain the shock in the great struggle towards which we are rapidly advancing; either in preserving religion in a few of the faithful, destined to become the germ of a glorious reign of peace and justice, or by preserving to the end, amongst its noble trials, the visibility of the Church.

Such is the revolution in question: it is gigantic, and man is insignificant. This revolution will find resistance of more than one kind, it will call forth passionate opposition; yet it is possible, and more so now than formerly. You will judge of it.

Fifteen years ago, the author of *Catholicism in Education* signalized, *ex professo*, the *canker-worm* of modern Europe. With the avowed object of destroying the empire usurped by paganism over the education of the Christian people, he preached the holy war. Without being a prophet, it was not difficult for him to announce that society would soon reach its ruin, if it did not quickly change its system. But, on the one hand, to attack classic paganism was at that time blasphemy; and, on the other, society, enervated by sensualism, only listened to the Sirens whose perfidious chant led towards the abyss. From this double cause his voice received but a feeble echo, and, less happy than the

INTRODUCTION

hermit of the middle ages, he scarce found any knights ready to combat. Isolated under the crossfire of his enemies, and *even of his friends*, he was forced to quit the field of battle. He was before his time, and withdrew to await his hour. This time is come, or it will never come; for society is on the eve of dissolution, and circumstances are changed. To the voice of the Siren has succeeded the roar of thunder; the inebriation of prosperity is dissipated under the blows of misfortune; the solemn warnings of Providence have not been lost on all. Some by fear, others by conviction, are driven to create a Catholic reaction; they applaud the effort made with this view. It is evident that the reaction of Catholicity on education, without which all reaction, all restoration, would lead to nothing, cannot continue to be looked upon as a thing indifferent. In fact, under these and other causes, the revolution has advanced, and now counts many and illustrious supporters.¹ Reproduced by them, the arguments against classic paganism will not again fall, as was the case sixteen years ago, buried under the storm of abuse and sophism. Some applaud whilst others are fear-stricken; but none, save the gods Termini, consider them an object of disdain.

To words succeed actions. Re-entered triumphant into the domain of religious architecture, Catholicism develops its movement, and begins to introduce itself into education, the vestibule of all power. Already on different points of France and of Europe, history, philosophy, and literature, open to it their long-closed sanctuaries. In a certain number of establishments, the study of the ancient languages is made, in part at least, by the aid of the Christian classics, and monopoly is shaken. It is clear the breach is open, it is only necessary to widen it, and the victorious revolution will advance to the citadel. Let us acknowledge, then, with gratitude, the work of Providence. Now, Providence does not grope; the revolution is then possible, — more so now than formerly.

That it is necessary, *immediately* and *sovereignly* necessary, it is the object of this book to show, by indicating the character of this revolution, and the means by which to insure success.

¹ I have in my mind at this moment the remarkable letter of his lordship the bishop of Langres, from which I shall have occasion to cite some passages.

CHAPTER I.

POSITION OF THE PROBLEM.

IN order that the truth of the proposition we are about to set forth may be the more apparent, we will abandon all abstract reasoning, all metaphysical theories, and only have recourse to a few striking facts, the signification of which is incontestable.

The First Fact. — With the exception of some few acts of disobedience, we find that during the Middle Ages the whole of Europe showed itself full of respect for, and obedience to, the Church. Christian in faith, laws, and customs, in institutions, arts, sciences, and language, society quietly developed those beautiful proportions which day by day brought it nearer the divine type of perfection.

Second Fact. — With the fifteenth century the sovereign empire of Catholicism became weakened; the ancient union of religion and society was shaken; the paternal voice of the Roman pontiffs, hitherto so deeply venerated, now became suspected; the majesty of their power was overshadowed; the filial submission of kings and peoples diminished; a fatal desire for independence sprung up in the bosom of society: everything announced a rupture.

Third Fact. — The sixteenth century had scarce commenced when, from the cell of a German monk, a voice arose — the powerful organ of the guilty thought which fermented in the soul. This voice said: “Nations, separate yourselves from the Catholic Church, fly from Babylon; break the leading-strings of your long infancy; henceforth you are strong enough and sufficiently enlightened to conduct yourselves.”

This voice was listened to with a degree of favor which causes us still to wonder. Throughout the larger portion of Europe society accused its mother of superstition and barbarism, abjured her doctrines, looked scornfully upon her greatest men, destroyed all that bore the mark of her sacred hand; destroyed or mutilated, as monuments of ignorance, slavery, and idolatry, the temples and edifices in which preceding ages had so nobly sheltered their faith whilst they immortalized their genius and skill.

Fourth Fact. — This incredible rupture was not the effect of a passing excitement: it still continues. Neither sufferings, nor humiliations, nor disappointments, nor catastrophes, nor calamities of all kinds, have been able to bring back the prodigal son to the paternal roof; on the contrary, he has continued to separate himself more widely from the Church, — he has shifted from one thing to another his living and active hatred; so that for the last three centuries Europe seems to have done but little else than despoil, enchain, and injure the Church. In our own days this paroxysm seems to have arrived at its height, and the war-cry of the former child of Catholicism resounds from the Adriatic to the Ocean, — from the Mediterranean to the Baltic: “*Christianity weighs upon us, we will not be ruled by it; the sight of it alone is insupportable to us.*” — *Such* are the expressions that constantly fall upon our ear.

Fifth Fact. — During this separation, the Church was not changed: she still remains what she was before, — equally good, wise, and devoted. She has not been silent or idle in the midst of suffering society. Perhaps, indeed, her maternal tenderness never displayed more universal solicitude, more untiring zeal. From her ever-fertile bosom sprung, in the fifteenth century, *thirty-five* religious orders or congregations; in the sixteenth, *fifty-two*; in the seventeenth, *ninety*. All those powerful bodies labored as one, acting incessantly on the family and on society at large, from the north to the east of Europe. From St. Vincent Ferrer to St. Vincent of Paul, numerous saints have astonished the world with their heroic virtues, making it manifest to the blind that the Roman Church has not ceased to be the incorruptible spouse of the Holy of Holies, the mother of all men truly worthy of the name of great: *Alma parens, alma virum*.

From Bellarmine to Bossuet, her wonderful doctors have proved that she is the perpetual source of light and wisdom. Continued in all the majesty of its power by the sovereign pontiffs and councils, Catholic teaching has long since crushed the principles of Protestantism, and the false motives which served as a pretext for the rupture, as well as those which have been invented later to support it. Neither arguments, nor warnings, nor kindness, nor supplication, nor any other means, have, however, succeeded in inducing European society to renew the ancient alliance in recognizing its legitimate parent.

From these undeniable facts the following conclusion evidently results: —

“That for four centuries a new element has appeared in Europe, — an element either more or less than existed during the Middle Ages, — and this element forms a wall of separation between Christianity and

INTRODUCTION

society.” What and where is this element, are questions we are about to examine.

CHAPTER II.

EXAMINATION OF THE PROBLEM.

THE investigation we are about to enter upon is of the greatest importance. Lest we wander from our subject, let us mark out the ground by setting forth the following incontestable principles

Firstly. — Every effect has its cause; every permanent effect a permanent cause.

Secondly. — Every word, every human action, public or private, is the effect of free-will, or the will of the soul. Will, or, to speak philosophically, the *volitions* of the soul, presuppose the idea or the notion of the thing willed; it being impossible to will a thing that is not already known, and of which one has no idea: *Ignoti nulla cupido; nihil volitum, nisi præcognitum.*

Thirdly. — Whether innate or not, ideas come from, or depend upon, teaching, which awakens or produces them. Education, then, forms the man.

Fourthly. — Education, which makes the man, which forms for life his mind and heart, is accomplished in that period which separates the cradle from adolescence, according to the following truth, which was proverbial three thousand years ago: “*Train up a child in the way it should go, and when it is old, it will not depart therefrom.*” — *Adolescens juxta viam suam, etiam cum senuerit, non recedet ab ea.* — Prov. xxii. 6.

Fifthly. — The life of man is divided into two epochs, perfectly distinct: — the epoch for *receiving*, and the epoch for *transmitting*. The first comprehends the time of education, that is, of development or instruction; the second, the remainder of life. Not existing of himself; man receives all, as well in the intellectual and moral as in the physical order. After having received, he transmits, and he cannot transmit what he has not received. In transmitting what he has received, he forms the family, or society, after his own image. The truth or falsehood, the good or evil, the order or disorder realized in the exterior actions of the family, or of society, are only the reflections and the productions of the

good or evil, the truth or falsehood, the order or disorder which reign in his soul.

Sixthly. — For good, as for evil, the influence comes from above, and not from below. The opinions and morals of the parents form those of their children. The opinions and morals of the lettered class form the opinions and morals of the unlettered.

Seventhly. — The opinions and morals of the lettered class come more directly from their literary education. This education is principally the result of the books that are placed in the hands of youth during the seven or eight years that unite childhood to adolescence. There are three reasons for this: first, because these are the most decisive years of life. Secondly, because these books form the daily nourishment of youth, a nourishment from which he cannot escape; these books must be carefully studied, learnt by heart, must be imbibed both in matter and form. Thirdly, because this assiduous study is accompanied with explanations and commentaries, in order that the sense of the books may be thoroughly understood, and the style, the thoughts, and the beauties of all kinds may be fully appreciated; the actions, the facts, the words, the institutions of the men and nations whose histories are related are lauded; in fine, and above all, the authors of these works are presented to the admiration of youth as unrivalled kings of talent and genius.

By right, then, all comes from education.

And, in fact, it is education of the superior classes that forms the education of the inferior classes, — opinion, morals, and society. This consequence is not less impregnable than the principles we have set forth above, and from which it as necessarily follows as the stream from its source. Sages at all times have proclaimed it. *“In our eyes,”* said they, *“the only way to reform the human race is to reform the education of youth. Education is the only lever with which to raise the world. Education is the empire, because it is the man; and man is society.”*

Though the sages had not paid this homage to the truth we have pointed out, it would have been sufficient to remove all doubt from our minds, to see the violence with which the two powers, of good and evil, have disputed the empire of education in all times and places. Under the apparently secondary question, of who shall teach the child to read, to write, to calculate, — Greek and Latin, — will be found hidden the question of sovereignty: *The cane of the master is the scepter of the world.*

From all this, what are we to conclude relative to the problem that occupies us? The reply is evident: it is, that in education we must seek the first and continuous cause of the rupture we have proved.

Elsewhere, you will only find occasional, indirect, and passing causes, which, though they may have hastened and given force to the rupture, are no more to be considered the origin of the evil, than are the tributaries of a river its source. What is now, in the public education of Europe, this cause or element which for four hundred years has dug between Christianity and society an abyss which nothing can close, and which goes on continually increasing? This it is that calls for all the sagacity of the philosopher, and the perfect impartiality of the judge.

Long before the rupture, we find throughout Europe public education reposing on the following organization, — the universities, gymnasiums, or colleges. After the rupture, we find the same. In France this organization existed in fact up to the end of the last century; it still generally exists in all the other parts of Europe. Nothing is changed as to form or principle.

Before the rupture, we find they taught Latin, Greek, the living and oriental languages, grammar, philosophy, rhetoric, the physical sciences, and mathematics. After the rupture, the same things; — nothing is changed.

Before the rupture, they taught the truths of religion with great care; and the masters and pupils, with but few exceptions, faithfully fulfilled their duties. After the rupture, religion was taught with equal fidelity, whilst the masters and their pupils, in general, up to the last century, continued to accomplish their precepts with exactness. In this respect nothing is changed.

Before the rupture, we find that education was placed in the hands of the clergy and religious orders. After the rupture, we find the same thing existing in all Catholic countries, and even in France up to the middle of the last century. In this respect nothing is changed.

Before the rupture, we find the chairs of the universities and gymnasiums filled by irreproachable, pious, zealous masters; by many doctors, illustrious in all branches of science. After the rupture, we find the same thing. In this respect nothing is changed.

Before the rupture, we find education perfectly free, monopoly was not invented. After the rupture, for near three centuries, the same liberty existed; the pagan doctrine of monopoly is of our own days. In this respect nothing is changed.

Such are, errors excepted, the most striking points of comparison presented by education during the two epochs. Before and after the rupture, these points resemble each other so nearly as to prove identity of institution; the same organization, the same teaching, the same men, the same spirit, the same end, the same liberty.

EXAMINATION OF THE PROBLEM

Whence comes it then that the results are so different? Whence is it that, though new-born generations drink at the same source, the one receives Catholic life in all its vigor, whilst the other imbibes the germ of death? How is it that the same education that gave to society in the Middle Ages strength and cohesion, against which all attacks of heresy, sensualism, and despotism were shattered, all at once finds itself helpless against the same attempts, so that these enemies have but to present themselves to enter full sail into the heart of Europe, and there enthrone themselves in perfect security?

Will it be said that this result must be attributed to the exterior circumstances under which education has been carried out since the fifteenth century? We will begin by asking how those circumstances have succeeded in developing themselves exterior to, and in spite of education? We will then say that these exterior circumstances, or this new medium, is Protestantism, and Protestantism is nothing else than the principle of revolt against the Church. This principle was not born in the sixteenth century; it has always existed in the world: the first Protestant was Lucifer. Since the revolt in the terrestrial paradise, the Church has encountered more powerful agents than Luther, more formidable instruments than Henry VIII. The question is, to know how, for a thousand years, education was able to neutralize these bad influences, and is now unable to resist them; and this not only in countries where they have been violently established, but also in places where they have never been officially received, as is proved by the weakening of the faith throughout Europe?

It remains for us then to seek the real, the general, the permanent cause of this defect in education. Here is the difficulty, for we find that education presents the same character after, as before the rupture. Where shall we find the change? Where is the unknown canker that, for four centuries, has grown in the tree and vitiated its sap? Where, in fine, is the new element, whose redoubtable power renders useless the hard lessons received by society, and the tender advances of the Church, and condemns the mother to tears and the daughter to death? In order to avoid all reproach of exaggeration, we declare, before continuing, that our intention is not to give an *exclusive* sense to what we state. We willingly acknowledge an antichristian movement, and other causes beyond those we mention, as combining to carry Europe away. But we conclude, with all thinking men who have seriously studied the question, that the cause we are about to develop is the most influential; it requires nothing more to justify, morally, the severity of our affirmation. Further, we protest against the interpretation of our words in any way that may be personally hostile to anyone, whoever it may be.

PAGANISM IN EDUCATION

We do not and will not attack anyone; neither the regular clergy, nor the university, nor the religious orders devoted to instruction: we attack paganism solely. This being established, we enter upon our reply.

CHAPTER III.

SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

A FOUNDER in Florence had long exercised his art with a wonderful success. The secret of his glory consisted in the skill with which he prepared the molds into which he poured, in turn, gold, silver, and bronze. One day the municipality of Florence ordered a statue of one of the great men of the republic, and the archbishop a bas-relief for one of the chapels of the celebrated *Duomo*. The glory of his country and his love for religion imparted to the artist a new ardor, and under this double inspiration his genius conceived a *chef-d'œuvre*. Unfortunately, he had at the moment but the mold of a horse in his studio; "No matter," thought he to himself, "I will combine the metals so well as to remedy this inconvenience." The silver and gold, wisely mingled, flowed together into the mold. They looked for a hero of antique form: the artist broke the mold, and . . . a horse was drawn forth!

"*Quanto sbaglio!*" said he; "but I see my error. I did not prepare my metals in the required proportions;" and he immediately set to work to arrange a new combination, and form a mold similar to the first; and a few days after there was a new cast. This time the artist worked for the archbishop, who awaited his bas-relief. The mold was opened, and again . . . a horse like the first!

"It is unpardonable!" cried the artist, striking the cast. "How could I forget that gold and silver are not the true metals for the founder? The right metal to cast in is bronze; with this I shall have no further errors, for we are old friends." He prepared with unusual care the mold and the metal, studied patiently all the conditions of the problem, and when they were solved, he lighted his furnace; very soon the metal of a beautiful color flowed into the mold, and produced . . . a superb horse in bronze, but still a horse.

The unfortunate artist then fell into despair; he attributed his failure to everything but himself, and died without discovering that in order to change the form you must change the mold.

People of Europe, you are the founder of Florence. Since the fifteenth century you have cast your children in a pagan mold, and are surprised they do not turn out Christians! Listen to your history.

During the middle ages, education was purely Christian. Pagan books were never placed as *classics* in the hands of childhood. They never touched them till they had come to an age when the mind, the heart, the imagination, and the soul, cast in the Christian mold, had taken its positive form; consequently paganism could only leave a secondary impression, without affecting the moral principle. At this period Christianity was like the substantial viands that appease the appetite at a banquet, whilst paganism formed the little nothings that make up the dessert.

And what was the result of this? — What will always result from education, — the young generations, nourished from the cradle upon Christianity, penetrated with Christianity, brought up in the knowledge, in the line, in the admiration of Christianity, in the enthusiasm of the glory of its works, transmitted to society what they had received: and society was Christian — profoundly Christian. And this Christian society created a Europe marvelous for its grandeur, its strength, its heroic virtues; and covered it with religious monuments, whose inimitable beauties form but the least part of its glory.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century you broke the Christian mold, and replaced it by a pagan one. The young generations were poured into it, and took the form, and the result was such as might naturally be expected: the young generations, nourished on paganism, brought up in the admiration of paganism, began to show themselves pagan, and to transmit to the world what they had received. If they were not altogether pagan from the first, it is because Christianity was still dominant in the family and society, and therefore prevented a complete and sudden transformation.

The influence of this first essay was such, however, that (and this is highly worthy of notice) the chiefs of the great revolt of the sixteenth century were amongst the most ardent disciples of classic paganism; they gloried in having been cast in the pagan mold, exalted the men who had formed them, daily plunged more deeply in, invited all the world to follow them, and forged an arm against the Church, accusing her language, her arts and sciences, of barbarism.

The danger became more and more serious: religion and society visibly lost ground. An attempt was made to form a new generation, which, profoundly Christian, should counterbalance the disastrous effect of that which had ceased to be so: the great Catholic reaction of the sixteenth century commenced. The most experienced doctors, the

SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

most learned of the religious orders, were called upon to assist, and they redoubled their activity. The most able of these great bodies, the immortal Society of Jesus, seemed created expressly to succor the Church and society, through the medium of education, at this critical juncture. She devoted herself without reserve, adopting, like her companion in arms, the pagan mold; for public opinion, which now acknowledged no other form, demanded this.

No one doubts but that the sixteenth century was the golden age, the age *de la renaissance*; the epoch, *par excellence*, for the worship of the antique in literature; the epoch of pagan artists, Hellenists, and humanists, who teemed in all parts of Europe, which re-echoed their dithyrambics in honor of the Greeks and Romans. The colleges of the illustrious Society of Jesus soon covered the soil of Europe. Crowds of youths — particularly those belonging to the upper classes — pressed around the chairs of these distinguished religious. The knowledge, the virtue, the devotedness, the paternal kindness of the masters, the orthodoxy of their doctrine, the variety and splendor of their religious ceremonies, all seemed to unite to resuscitate and perpetuate in society in general, but more particularly the higher classes, the vigorous faith of the Middle Ages.

The Benedictines, the Oratorians, and many others, emulated the Jesuit fathers in zeal and learning, whilst the universities, rich in professors, not less distinguished for their virtue than for their talents, concurred in the universal restoration by crowning with their learned lectures the edifice apparently so well adapted for Catholic teaching.

What was the final result of this well-combined and general action? — the same as that obtained by the Florentine founder. They cast the generations in a pagan mold, and produced pagan generations. According to the law of human nature, these generations soon transmitted what they had received, and paganism inundated Europe. Alas! history proves it: instead of being revived, the Christian spirit went on degenerating, more particularly with the lettered class, in whom the zeal of so many excellent masters should have awakened a new vigor. And this state of things went on to such an extent, that at the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century none were less Christian, in morals and belief, throughout Europe, than those men who had most largely partaken of the public instruction.

That these bitter fruits, save, perhaps, some of the less pernicious, are the produce of the pagan tree planted in the bosom of Europe, and tended with so much care for the nourishment of youth, another observation of a different order helps to confirm. The opposite sex, into whose education the pagan element does not enter, or at least is

admitted only in small quantities, has always shown itself the more Christian of the two; whilst the lower classes, preserved from the same scourge, have remained true to the ancient faith, and have never shown themselves inimical to religion, save under the influence of the classes raised in the schools of Greece and Rome.

Founder of Florence, neither your art nor your intention can change the nature of things; so long as you pour your metals into the mold of a horse, you will have a horse.

People of Europe, so long as you cast your youths in the mold of paganism, you will have pagan generations: neither your laws on education, however liberal they may be, nor the talents of your professors, nor your intentions, can change anything.

It is an error to think otherwise. This error you have committed, daily committed, for more than three centuries, and this is the canker-worm that consumes you.

Such is the solution of the problem.

The aberration we have depicted has become so evident, and the consequences that threaten Europe so serious, that men least open to suspicion cannot help calling out against them. Under the threat of an inevitable, and perhaps fatal catastrophe, they adjure society to change its system. As a proof of this, it is sufficient that we quote, with a certain reserve, a member of the National Assembly, speaking on the late law relative to education

“From the commencement of this debate, the university and the clergy have exchanged accusations like balls. ‘You pervert youth with your philosophical rationalism,’ say the clergy. ‘You brutalize them with your religious dogmas,’ replies the university. Then come the conciliators, who say, ‘Religion and philosophy are sisters. Let us have a fusion. Clergy and university, you have mutually enjoyed the monopoly; divide, and be satisfied.’

“We have heard the venerable bishop of Langres thus apostrophize the university: — ‘It is you who have given us the socialist generation of 1848.’ And M. Crémieux retorts in these terms: ‘It is you who brought up the revolutionary generation of 1793.’

“If there is any truth in these allegations, what must we conclude? That both systems have been bad; not in those respects wherein they differ from each other, but in what they have in common. Yes, this is our conviction: there is between these two systems a point in common, it is, the *abuse of the study of the classics*; and by this both have perverted the judgment and morals of the country. They differ in as much as, with the one, the religious element predominates; with the other, that of philosophy; but these elements, far from having caused

SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

the evil, have attenuated it. We owe it to them that we are not so barbarous as the barbarians continually proposed for our imitation *in the Latin course*.

“Permit us a supposition, which, though it be somewhat forced, will explain our idea. Imagine a nation to exist in the antipodes, that hates and contemns labor, and founds all its means of existence on the pillage of the neighboring nations. We will suppose this nation to have framed its politics, its morals, its religion, its public opinions, on these brutal principles. France having given to the clergy the monopoly of education, they think they cannot do better than send the rising generation to these people, to live as they do, to imbibe their sentiments, to partake of their enthusiasm, and adopt their ideas; taking care, however, that every youth is provided with a little volume called the *Gospel*. The generations thus raised return to their native soil, a revolution breaks out; — I leave it to you to suppose the part they will play.

“Seeing this, the State deprives the Church of the monopoly, and places it in the hands of the university. The university, faithful to the traditions, also sends its youths to the antipodes, to this nation of pilferers and holders of slaves, having provided them, however, with a little volume entitled *Philosophy*. Five or six generations have scarce grown up and returned to their native land, when a second revolution breaks out. Formed at the same school as their predecessors, they show themselves worthy emulators. Then comes the war between the monopolizers. ‘It is your little book that has done all the evil,’ say the clergy. ‘It is yours,’ replies the university.

“No, gentlemen, your little books have nothing to do in the matter. What has done the evil is the strange idea of sending the French youth, destined to labor, to dwell in peace, and to enjoy liberty, to imbibe, to become impregnated, saturated with the sentiments and opinions of a nation of brigands and slaves. I affirm that the subversive doctrines to which has been given the name of *socialism* or *communism*, are the fruit of the classic education given by the clergy of the university. I add, that the bachelor’s degree will impose this classic teaching even in those pretended free schools which ought, say they, to come within the law.”¹

But I hear it said: 1st. “You are too absolute; the change of the mold, to use your own expression, was not so sudden as you pretend;” 2nd. “And though it might have been, you attribute an undue influence to a simple form: classic paganism, or *la renaissance*, is but a new form given to the same meaning;” 3rd. “Admitting this influence, you must

¹ *Baccalaureat et Socialisme*, par M. F. Bastiat, iv. 12.

PAGANISM IN EDUCATION

acknowledge that it was, if not absolutely necessary, at least very serviceable in extricating Europe from barbarism.”

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST OBJECTION ANSWERED. — HISTORY OF THE CLASSIC BOOKS: FIRST EPOCH.

YOU say, in the first place, that we are too positive, and that the change in the mold was not so complete as we affirm. To reply to this, we must rapidly retrace the history of the classic works from the establishment of Christianity to the present time. This history divides itself naturally into three distinct epochs.

The *first* extends from the teaching of the apostles to the end of the fifth century.

The *second* begins at the sixth century, and finishes with the fifteenth; it comprehends the Middle Ages, properly speaking.¹

The *third* part from the sixteenth century to our own days.

Carefully distinguishing childhood from adolescence, we say: During the first epoch the classic books for childhood were *exclusively* Christian. Everyone knows that the languages which we now call classic, or dead, were, at that time, the living languages of Rome and Athens, as well as of all civilized peoples. Children learnt them, not in schools, but at the domestic hearth; not from masters, but from their parents and nurses; not by rule, but from use, as we acquire our mother-tongue. During this epoch, childhood was prolonged: it was not then necessary to make the young people study grammar so early, nor for so many years, as is now the custom.

And what was it that continually fell upon the ear of the Christian child in the bosom of his family? — what books did he constantly hold in his innocent hands? — what chants did they repeat in common? The reply is not doubtful: everyone knows the extreme care of the first Christians to nourish themselves and their children exclusively on the

¹ I tempi di mezzo, come è noto, si ostendono d' all' anno cinquecento dell' era nostra volgare fino all' anno mille cinquecento, per il corso intero di anni mille. — Battini, *Apol. dei Secoli Barb.* p. 9.

*holy book, the acts of martyrs, and the letters of the sovereign pontiffs; they taught them to repeat by heart, and to chant with themselves, the psalms of David; they grounded them thoroughly in the dogmas, the precepts, the usages of religion; so that these young champions had the courage to confess their faith in the midst of torments, and the ability to defend it against the sophisms and calumnies of the pagan.*²

This kind of instruction was not new; we find it with the Jews from all antiquity, to the exclusion of everything else. To withhold from their children all other books but the sacred annals of their nation, to teach them to chant only the religious chants of Moses and the prophets, was the invariable custom of the descendants of Abraham and Jacob. Jews by origin, and heirs of the ancient Church, the apostles formed the education of the faithful on the type of the education in use in the holy nation.

The proofs of this assertion present themselves *en masse*. The exclusion of profane authors is commanded in the most formal manner by the Apostolic Constitutions. In this monument, which St. Athanasius calls the doctrine of the apostles, collected by St. Clement; and St. Epiphanius, the uncorrupted summary of the rules of conduct, we read: “Abstain from all books of the Gentiles. What have you to do with these doctrines, with these strange laws, with these false prophets? Some thoughtless men have lost their faith through them. What is there wanting in the law of God that you have recourse to these fables? If you desire history, you have the book of Kings; if you want philosophy, or poetry, you have it in the Proverbs, and with more perfection and elevation than in any work of these sophists or these poets. The word of God alone is wise. Do you seek lyrics? — read the Psalms; ancient origins? — read Genesis; laws and moral precepts? — take the divine code of the Lord. Abstain, then, absolutely from all these profane and diabolical works.”³

² Christiani parentes enim pueros suos a teneris unguiculis SS. martyrum acta et summorum pontificum epistolas perlegere, sacras scripturas memoriae mandare, psalmos, psalmos canere, omniaque religionis mysteria, doctrinas, leges, instituta diligentissime ediscere jubebant; ut deinde, data occasione, adolescentes possint Christi fidem, non solum inter tormenta carnificum magno animo profiteri; verum etiam contra ethnicorum calumnias et sophistarum cavillationes libero et disertis ore defendere. — *De Opp. SS. PP.* in liter. juven. adhib. Romæ, 1841; Mamachi, *Origin. et Antiq. Christ.* lib. iii. c. 5 etc.

³ *Const. Apost.* lib. i. c. 6. We know that the authenticity of the Apostolic Constitutions is far from certain; but it is incontestable that all antiquity has revered this work as a faithful witness of the spirit of primitive tradition. St. Athanasius cites it under the name of *Doctrinam Apostolorum Clementinam*. “Agnovit,” adds Baronius (*Ann.* tom. ii. an.

As to the assiduity with which the Holy Scriptures were read by children in those times, let us penetrate into the interior of some of these ancient families of the East or West; their example will show the general spirit, and we shall see that the sacred book was the first classic of childhood. "From the time that Origen," says Eusebius, "left the cradle, his father Leonidus imprinted on his mind the divine letters. He was not satisfied to give some few moments snatched from the studies of the age to this study, he placed it in the first rank. Every day he made the child learn *some passages of Scripture*, and the young Origen took more pleasure in this than in studying the Greek authors." ⁴

In the enlightened and Christian family of Gregory education was conducted in the same manner. The Holy Scriptures were insinuated into the mind of the child with its first thoughts. Thus were brought up Saints Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, their brothers and sisters, St. Gregory of Nazianzen, and Cæsarius. Macrina, one of their sisters, became a teacher without being a mother, and surpassed her parents and masters. Having taken the vow of virginity, she bestowed upon her younger brother, whose birth she had witnessed, all that maternal tenderness which nature plants in the woman's heart. She took the child from the cradle, and desired to bring him up herself according to her own ideas, which were those she had received in her own education.⁵ Let us now listen to her illustrious brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa; he has made known to us the education of Macrina.

"Scarcely had she grown out of infancy," says he, "when she displayed a most happy facility for learning; her mother undertook to instruct her, and for this purpose studied herself. She was very careful not to teach her the fictions of the poets, too often offered to the young mind. It seemed to her ill-becoming, and even dangerous, to represent to the imagination of her daughter the pictures and impassioned movements of the tragic poets, but still more so to make her conversant with the weaknesses attributed to women in comedies: it would be, in her opinion, to infect and corrupt a well-disposed soul at the most tender age.

"She preferred to make choice of some of the most edifying traits and most striking maxims contained in our holy books, and her little pupil learnt them. The book of Wisdom furnished her with a multitude of

102, n. ix.) "eas S. Epiphanius; usi sunt iisdem, qui his antiquiores atque recentiores in Ecclesia claruerunt celebres scriptores ecclesiastici." "Omnis enim," continues Saint Epiphanius, "regularis ordo in ipsa (*Constit. Apost.*) habetur, et nihil a fide adulteratum, neque a confessione, neque ab ecclesiastica gubernatione et regula." — *Id. id.*

⁴ *Hist.* lib. iv. c. 3.

⁵ *Influence des Pères sur l'Education*, etc. 2nd part, par M. Lalanne.

sentences and reflections calculated to form the heart and enlighten the mind, to guide her through life. This excellent mother had extracted certain invocations from the Psalms, which she adapted to her exercises, so that whether her daughter rose, dressed, or took her repasts, she had always a verse appropriate to the circumstance, which she chanted with great grace. Whilst Emily thus cultivated the mind of her child, she exercised her in the works suited to her sex, and taught her to handle the spindle with skill.”⁶

Such was the education of Macrina, and such also was that of her young brother Peter, with which she charged herself. The study of profane literature was absolutely banished, and their kind mistress knew so well how to distribute their time, that none was left to give to vain pursuits.⁷

Education was the same everywhere. Saint Jerome, writing to Gaudencia and Leta on the education of their children, directed that the young Pacatula should commence from her seventh year to furnish her memory with the beautiful inspirations of the prophet king, and up to her fourteenth year she should make the books of Solomon, the Gospel, the evangelists, and prophets the treasure of her heart.⁸ “It is by the Scripture itself,” he says to Leta, “that your child will learn to read, to write, and to speak; that her young tongue may know how to repeat the sweet canticles of the prophet king. Do not form for her an assemblage of words taken by hazard; but choose from the holy writings, and let the first words she pronounces be the names of the apostles, the patriarchs, and the prophets. The first book she will learn must be the psalter: these divine canticles she will repeat on waking. In the Proverbs of Solomon she will learn to live wisely; in Ecclesiasticus, to trample under foot the things of the world; in Job, the virtue of patience and courage. She will next pass to the Gospel, never to quit it; she will identify herself with the Acts and the Epistles of the Apostles; each day she will repeat to you some passages which will be as a bouquet of flowers culled from Scripture . . . Guard her from all such reading as would introduce the pagan language even into the bosom of Christianity. What can there be in common between the profane chants of paganism and the chaste chords from the lyre of the prophets? How can we associate Horace with David? Virgil with the Gospel? It is useless to plead the excuse of

⁶ Vit. *B. Macrin.*

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Quum autem virgunculam rudem et edentulam septimus ætatis annus receperit . . . discat memoriter Psalteriurn, et usque ad annos pubertatis, libros Salomonis, Evangelia, Apostolos, et Prophetas sui cordis thesaurum faciat. — *Ep. ad Gaud.* xcvi. p. 798, *Opp.* tom. iv.

intention, it is always a scandal to see a Christian soul in a temple of idols.”⁹

Let it not be said here, that this refers to the education of little girls. We have already seen that the Scriptures were the classics of the children of both sexes. If this is not sufficient, listen again to the fathers, the directors, and historians of the primitive families. “Be careful,” says St. Chrysostom, “not to consider the study of our holy books as superfluous. It is the Scriptures that will teach your children to honor their fathers and mothers; you will there gain as much as they. Do not say that this is only good for persons separated from the world. Certainly, I do not pretend to make solitaries of you; if your sons become so, they will have nothing to lose: but no, it is sufficient that they are Christian. They are destined to live in the world; it is in our holy book they will find their rule of conduct: but for this *they must search from their earliest years.*”¹⁰

When the community took the place of the family for the education of the youth, St. Basil wrote: “The study of letters ought to be accommodated to the mind of the child, *the Holy Scriptures should serve as a vocabulary.* Instead of fables, the beautiful histories of the Bible should be related to them; they will learn by heart the maxims in the book of Proverbs; rewards must be offered to them, either for the exercise of their memory or for their compositions, in order that they may give themselves to study as to a recreation of the mind, without fatigue and without repugnance.”¹¹

But it is a fact that supersedes all evidence. Every discourse of the ancient fathers of the Church, every page of history of these heroic times, offers a striking proof that the Scriptures were the classics used in every eastern or western family. Origen, St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and many others, it is certain, were not wanting in tact and zeal any more than in knowledge and eloquence. How could these great men have treated the highest questions of theology and Scripture before their faithful, had they not known that their auditors, instructed in these things from their infancy, were perfectly able to comprehend them?¹²

⁹ *Ad Læt.* epist. lvii. tom. iv. p. 591; *id. ad Eustoch.* epist. xviii. tom. iv. p. 42; *ad Gaudent.* *id.* p. 796.

¹⁰ Homil. xxi. in *Epist. ad Ta.*

¹¹ xv. Reg. i.

¹² Familiare Patres habuerunt, ut allegoricos tropologicosque sensus indagarent; inque numeris includi legique magna mysteria existimarent, quæ populis suis putabant candide detegenda. Et hinc sane colligi potest, multa quæ nobis quamdam obscuritatis caliginem obtendunt, antiquis illis temporibus aperta, etiam populo extitisse, utpote talibus

It is well known that a wrong word in citing the Gospel was sufficient to put a whole assemblage on the alert, and that St. Augustine dared not allow St. Jerome's version to be read, although perfectly orthodox, lest it should appear that he was introducing something new, and thereby scandalize the people, who were accustomed to another version. Who does not know that St. Jerome himself, charged by Pope Damasus with the correction of the holy book, hesitated to undertake it, foreseeing that he would excite the enemies of all the faithful? ¹³

"Where is," says he, "either the learned or the ignorant, who, taking my translation in hand, and perceiving the difference there is between what he there reads, and what he has, as it were, sucked with his mother's milk, will not cry out against me as false and sacrilegious, accusing me of daring to change, to add to, or withdraw from the ancient copies?" ¹⁴

Scripture, then, was the first classic book placed in the hands of youth during those ages which touched the cradle of Christianity. To the holy books were added *The Acts of the Martyrs*, the first of which were contemporaneous with the apostles. It was not in public assemblies and churches only that they read them; every one used them for his private and most ordinary reading: they were the books of the family. The greatest saints never ceased to recommend the study of them; and such was the veneration and love of our fathers for these sacred monuments, that many carried them about them, and could not bear to be without them even whilst journeying. Hence it was they spared no expense, and shrunk before no danger to procure them.¹⁵

It was the same with the letters of the Sovereign Pontiffs; read, revered, and commented on around the domestic hearth, they became a living rule of conduct and of faith, as well as a source of consolation to parents and children. Later, the works of the first saints and defenders of religion were added.¹⁶ Thus we find that, during the first five centuries, *exclusively Christian* classics were used for *Christian children*, and these children remained much longer under the

audiendis assuefacto. — *Præf. in S. Ambr. Opp.*

¹³ Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. i. c. 11; *St. August.* epist. lxxi. et lxxxii

¹⁴ Quis doctus pariter vel indoctus, cum in manus volumen assumpserit, et a saliva quam semel imbibit, viderit discrepare quod lectitat, non statim erumpat in vocem me falsarium, me clamitatus esse sacrilegum, qui audeam aliquid in veteribus libris addere, mutare, corrigere? — *Præf. in quatuor Evang.*

¹⁵ D. Ruinart, *Act. Sincer. etc.* Præf. pp. 8, 9.

¹⁶ Cypriani opuscula semper in manu teneat, Athanasii epistolas et Hilarii libros inoffenso decurrat pede. Illorum tractatibus illorum delectetur ingeniis, in quorum libris pietas fidei non vacillet. Cæteros sic legat, ut magis judicet quam sequatur. — S. Hier. *ad Læt.* epist. lvii. tom. iv. p. 596.

protection of the paternal roof than in our days: these are the double facts that are discovered from the primitive monument of the East and West.

The frequentation of pagan schools and the reading of pagan works did not commence till a more advanced age, when the child was furnished with the best preservatives. On this point the preceding details and the history of the most illustrious Fathers of the Church do not leave any doubt. Saint Basil and St. Chrysostom had arrived at the age of adolescence when they took lessons of the rhetorician Libanius; St. Gregory of Nazianzen was no longer a child when he was sent, first to Asarca, then to Alexandria, and finally to Athens; St. Jerome was eighteen years of age when he went to Rome to study grammar under Donatus. Pagan classics and pagan schools were for the *adolescent*, and for them only. Could it be otherwise?

Christianity, at its birth, deprived of all human literature, found pagan society in possession of literature and science. The pagan masters had the exclusive right of teaching from the public chairs. If Christians attempted this, they were obliged to make use of pagan authors. In fact, these authors were looked upon by all as finished models of eloquence, of poetry, and of general literature. If the Christian masters had interdicted the use of these works, or banished them from their own studies, what means would they have had by which to initiate their young Christians in human sciences? What specious pretext the pagans would have had for calumniating religion! Would they have failed to do, what the pagans of our own times have not blushed at, to accuse them of *obscurantism* and barbarity? With what apparent reason would they not have accused them of being inimical to enlightenment, had they shut to their disciples the only source of eloquence and philosophy then known? ¹⁷ Such a system inevitably would have ruined the Christian masters, and driven the youths to the doctors of paganism.

Nothing, we must avow, could be more distressing than the condition of the Christian youths. However, they were equally exempt from danger and from fault. From peril, because, as we have seen, it was not till after they had been thoroughly fortified against the poison of pagan works and masters, that they made use of them. Tertullian, who was an ocular witness of this wise system, bears testimony in the following words: —

“It was neither curiosity nor pleasure, but solely necessity, which determined them to read pagan works and listen to pagan masters.

¹⁷ Hebetes, stolidi, obtusi, rudes, idiotæ, insensati, indocti, impoliti, inepti, agrestes. — Lucian. *De Morte Peregrin.* p. 338. Latebrosa, et lucifuga natio. — Min. Felix, *Octav.* p. 5.

Saint Jerome speaks of this necessity when, condemning these Christians, and more particularly ecclesiastics, who read pagan authors solely for pleasure, he excuses the youths who are obliged to make use of them: that which is, says he, a necessity for the young, becomes a crime when adopted from choice.”¹⁸

This necessity was very different to the pretext made use of since the time of the *renaissance*. “It is to teach us to think, to feel, and to express ourselves well, that we are made to study Virgil and Cicero, Homer and Demosthenes.” Such a reason would have been considered by our fathers as an outrage against religion, and a kind of apostasy. “What can there be in common,” writes St. Jerome, “between light and darkness? between Jesus Christ and Belial? What connection between David and Horace? Paul and Cicero? Is it not a scandal for your brother to see you in the temple of idols? It is forbidden to us to drink at the same time of the chalice of Jesus Christ and that of the devils.”¹⁹

Was it to induce the young Christian to admire the riches of pagan philosophy and adopt its system, that he was made to practice it for four centuries? No — for these philosophers were called in those days animals of glory, patriarchs of heretics; and him whom we do not fear to call *divine*, the great artisan of all the errors that desolate the Church. The Fathers went even still farther; they composed works expressly to call down, both upon them and their systems, public derision. Does such language, in the mouths of the Fathers, prove their intention to make the young Christians the disciples of the philosophers?²⁰

Was it, at least, to copy their orators, to appropriate the forms of their eloquence, the measure of their language? No one will think of denying that the ancient Fathers drew words, expressions, and style, from the pagan books — either because, not having composed any works on these subjects, no others existed from which they could take their models; or because most of the Fathers having been born pagans,

¹⁸ Absit, ut de ore Christiano sonet: *Jupiter omnipotens, et me Hercule, et me Castor, et cætera magis portenta quam numina. At nunc etiam sacerdotes Dei, omissis Evangeliiis et Prophetis, videmus . . . tenere Virgilium; et id quod in pueris necessitatis est, crimen in se facere voluptatis, alias voluntatis. — Epist. ad Damas. De duob. Filiis, Opp. tom. iv. p. 153.*

¹⁹ Quæ communicatio lucis ad tenebras? Quis concursus Christo cum Belial? Quid facit Psalterio Horatius, cum Evangeliiis Maro, cuni Apostolo Cicero? Nonne scandalizatur frater, si te viderit in idolis recumbentem? Simul bibere non debemus calicem Christi et calicem dæmoniorum. — *Epist. ad Eustoch.*

²⁰ Gloriæ animal et popularis auræ atque rumorum venale mancipium. — *S. Hier. ad Pammach. epist. lv. Op. tom. iv. p. 585. Patriarchæ hæreticorum. — Id. ad Ctesiphont. Doleo Platonem fuisse omnium hæreseon condimentarium. — S. Iren. De Hæresit.; Hermias, Irrisio Philos.*

were not converted till late in life. Is it astonishing that, children of pagans, and pagans themselves during a part of their lives, they should have learnt the pagan tongue, or even the rhetoric which many of them taught with distinction? As to the eloquence which is still their glory, it was not from the pagan authors they drew either its principles or form, but from the holy books, more particularly from the prophets, with whom, according to the energetic expression of St. Jerome, continual meditation identified them.²¹

The striking proof of this is, that the eloquence of the Fathers differs from that of the pagan orators as much as Heaven from Earth. The one is as remarkable for the spontaneity of expression, solidity of thought, vivacity of feeling, magnificence of imagery, and abundance of proof contained in it, as the other is for the art of its rhetoric, its choice of words, and elegance of its phrases. The *scattered members* of Cicero, — *disjecta Tullii membra*, which are so easily recognized in Quintilian, for example, will be sought in vain in St. Ambrose, St. Maximus, St. Augustine, St. Cyprian, St. Leo, St. Peter Chrysologus, or St. Gregory. Thus it is also with Demosthenes or Isocrates, no traces of whom will be found in St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Gregory Nazianzen, or St. Cyril of Alexandria. Nothing in their immortal discourses marks the imitation of paganism; all is primitive, original, and inspired by the invincible force of faith, and an ardent zeal for the salvation of the world.

What has been said of eloquence may be said of history, epistles, and philosophy. The style of Eusebius, of Sulpicius Severus, of Julius Africanus, of St. Cyprian, St. Paulinus, St. Justinian, of Origen, and other Christian writers, respectively, historians, writers of epistles, and philosophers, does not in any way resemble the manner of Xenophon, Suetonius, Cicero, Pliny, or Seneca. If, as is pretended, the Fathers read, and caused to be read, the pagan authors for the sake of imitation, we must avow they were very unfortunate. Nevertheless, they were not wanting in study, knowledge, or genius. They could imitate them very well when they wished. Saint Augustine cites a striking example, taken from St. Cyprian, and adds: “For number, elegance, and richness, this phrase is admirable; but its richness is not unfavorable to Christian gravity. Those who like this style of writing accuse those who do not employ it with inability: they do not know that it is on purpose, and from good taste, that they abstain from it. Saint Cyprian then has shown

²¹ Quos meditatione diuturna quasi in naturam verterant.

that he could have borrowed this language, since he has done so, and he has shown also that he would not, since he has used it so little.”²²

Saint Jerome, a no less excellent judge in this matter than St. Augustine, shows also that Lactantius has admirably imitated Cicero, and St. Hilary the number and style of Quintilian.²³ And was this imitation a glory? By no means; St. Augustine has shown us this, and St. Jerome says, “What you admire, we contemn.”²⁴ The Greek think with the Latin Fathers. Certain it is that if the young Christians were obliged to study the profane authors in order to form their taste and style, under the penalty of having neither the one nor the other, as has been incessantly insisted on for the last three centuries, we should undoubtedly find it so stated by St. Basil, who composed a work especially to serve as a guide to young men in their study of the profane authors. This great doctor, however, does not say a word, not a single word; and nothing can be more eloquent than his silence.

But, you will say, what was the object in permitting young Christians to read the works of pagans and frequent their schools? What advantage did they expect to draw from this practice? You will admit that, in the eyes of men as serious and religious as our fathers, the advantage must have been of a nature to compensate the very serious danger of studying pagan works, in spite of all the precautions taken to preserve the innocence of their children. Unless the necessity had been imperious, a father would not give up the son of his tenderness to the dangers of a sea strewn with rocks. It is certain he looked for something more than the puerile advantage of making them rhetoricians or academicians.

It was necessary for their children, first, to know the history of their own country, and that of other nations, the archives of which being written by pagan hands, were entirely at the mercy of pagans; secondly, to study the arts and physical sciences, the monopoly of which also belonged to the pagans; thirdly, to give to Christianity the truths which paganism had audaciously usurped and disfigured; fourthly, after the example of St. Paul, to make use of the maxims, the examples, the authority of the pagan philosophers and sages, either to encourage the practice of some particular virtue, or to make the truths and precepts of the faith more accessible to reason; or, as St. Augustine says, “to take from the Egyptians their vessels of gold and silver, and give them to the

²² We will cite later the entire passage.

²³ Lactantius de ira et opificio Dei duo volumina condidit, quos si legere volueris, Dialogorum Ciceronis in eis epitomem reperies. Hilarius, meorum confessor temporum et episcopus, duodecim Quintiliani libros et stylo iniitatus est et numero. — *Epist. ad Magnum, Op.* tom. iv. p. 650.

²⁴ Hoc quod vos riramini, iam contempsimus. — *Epist. ad Pammach.*

Israelites, that they might serve to ornament the tabernacle;" fifthly, to be able to detect the errors of the pagans, their prejudices against Christianity, their arguments in favor of idolatry, the objections and the systems of the philosophers, in order to refute them successfully, and to combat them with their own arms; for what means are there of defeating an enemy whose tactics, strength, fortifications, and arms are unknown to us?

This was the sole, the great object of enlightened Christians. Placed, from the cradle, in face of an indefatigable enemy, they found themselves obliged to combat, night and day, for themselves and for their brothers. In order to attain this end, or, rather let us say, to accomplish this great duty, it was indispensable to know not only the science of the pagans, but their language also, and to speak it with a certain purity, for fear of being accused of ignorance and barbarism, and thereby failing to receive attention.

With respect to the motives that led to the young Christians studying the pagan authors in the first ages of the Church, you have heard St. Basil, St. Augustine, St. Justin, Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, Hermias, St. Jerome, and with them were all the most enlightened guides to Christian youths.²⁵ From their universal teaching results the following unassailable conclusion: that the first Christians studied the works of

²⁵ S. Basil, *De legendis Gentilium Libris*, tom. ii. p. 2, p. 243, where he says: Hæc quidem etsi perfectius in nostris libris condiscimus, at certe quantum adumbrandæ nunc virtuti satis est, tantum ex documentis externis rudius delibamus. S. Aug. *De Doct. Christ.*; S. Just. *Dialog. cum Trypho.*; Tatian, *Contra Gentes*; Clem. Alexand. *Strom.* i., where he expresses himself thus: Quæ est ex fide veritas, necessaria est ad vivendum; quæ autem præcedit disciplina (profana eruditio) est obsonio similis et bellariis; desinente cœna, suavis est placentula. Hermias, *Irris. Philosoph.*; S. Hier. *Epist. ad Magnum*, Opp. tom. iv. p. 64, in which is found this remarkable passage: Quæris cur in opusculis nostris, sæcularium litterarum interdum sociamus exemplo, et candorem Ecclesiæ ethnicorum sordibus polluamus? Breviter responsum habeto. Quis enim nesciat et in Moyse et in prophetarum voluminibus quædam assumpta de gentilium libris? . . . Sed et Paulus apostolus Epimenidis poetæ abusus versiculo est, scribens ad Titum: *Cretenses, semper mendaces, malæ bestię, ventres pigri*. Et apud Athenienses in Martis curia disputans, Aratum testem vocat: *Ipsius enim et genus sumus*. Ac ne parum hoc esset, ductor Christiani exercitus et orator invitus pro Christo causam agens, etiam inscriptionem fortuitam arte torquet ad argumentum fidei. Didicerat enim a vero David, extorquere de manibus hostium gladium, et Goliæ superbissimi caput proprio mucrone truncare. *Ad Pammach.* Opp. tom. iv. p. 585, where he expresses himself as follows: Christum scimus sapientiam. Hic thesaurus in agro Scripturarum nascitur . . . Sin autem adamaveris mulierem captivam, id est, sapientiam sæcularem, et eius pulchritudine captus fueris, decalva eam, et illecebris crinium atque ornamento verborum cum emortuis unguibus seca. Lava earn prophetali nitro, at tunc requiescens cum illa dicito: *Sinistra eius sub capite meo, et dextera illius amplexabitur me*, et multos tibi fœtus captiva dabit, ac de Moabitide efficietur Israelitis.

P A G A N I S M I N E D U C A T I O N

paganism, not to imitate them, but to cull what they contained that might serve for the glory and defense of religion. Thus it was also that the Church studied pagan art, not to perpetuate it, either as to principle or form, but to transform it into an element of Christian art: she studied it in its philosophical and religious systems, not to exalt but to crush it.

CHAPTER V.
CONTINUATION.

NOTHING can be more important than the objects alleged by the Fathers in allowing Christian youths who had come to the age of adolescence to study the pagan authors and to attend their schools. However, it is worthy of particular attention that the Fathers did not agree amongst themselves on this point. In conformity to the spirit of the Apostolic Constitutions, the greatest number of them²⁶ have formally pronounced against this kind of instruction, because of the danger to which faith and morals are exposed by it. The others think that persons arrived at the age of adolescence may read the pagan classics, but with a certain reserve and great precaution. Amongst the latter let us listen to Tertullian, St. Gregory of Nazianzen, and St. Basil; later we will quote those who take the contrary view. "When a child," says Tertullian, "brought up in the faith and imbued with its principles, attends the school (of a pagan master), he ought to be *cautioned and fortified against error*. He will learn the *letter*, which is useful, and condemn the false and impious doctrine against which he is already on his guard."²⁷

"It is the common feeling of all men of good sense," says in his turn St. Gregory of Nazianzen, "that of all blessings man has received, instruction must be placed in the first rank. I do not speak only of things in the supernatural order, which may be estranged from all grace and ornament of language . . . I have also in view, that instruction which does not relate to faith and its dogmas, that knowledge which *most* Christians look upon as *vain and illusory, full of perils*, only serving to estrange souls from God, and with this *they condemn and abhor it*."²⁸

The disagreement we signalize diminishes in proportion as Christianity extends its empire and multiplies its books; consequently, as the motives for studying paganism and borrowing from it loses its

²⁶ Cortellier counts *eleven*.

²⁷ *De Idol.* c. 10.

²⁸ *Oratio Funeb. S. Basil.*

value. Thus we see the same St. Gregory of Nazianzen, who had shown himself favorable to the study of paganism, modify his opinion, and towards the end of his life, write in these terms to one of his friends, Adamantius, who asked of him books of literature: "The books which you ask of me I have put aside since the day when, *obeying the divine inspiration*, I turned my eyes towards Heaven. It was necessary that all childish play should be finished; it was necessary to cease to lisp, to aspire, at length, after true knowledge, and sacrifice to the word all these frivolous discourses, with all that had hitherto charmed my leisure; but since you are determined to give the preference to that which ought to hold the second rank, and nothing can turn you from this design, here are my books. I send those to you which have escaped the worm, or are not blackened with smoke, on the hook to which I had suspended them above my hearth, as the pilot who has retired from the sea suspends his helm. I engage you, however, to study the sophist thoroughly. Acquire all necessary knowledge and communicate it to the young, provided the fear of God rules over all these vanities." ²⁹

But beneath we have something still more decided; Gregory, in his eulogy of St. Athanasius, carried away by a just admiration for the generous defender of the faith, praised him without bounds for having, at an early age, abandoned the study of human sciences. "He was brought up," says he, "in the practice of good morals, and initiated in the sciences and in learning; but as soon as he had acquired sufficient not to appear altogether uneducated and ignorant of these things, he devoted himself entirely to the meditation of the holy books." ³⁰ What a difference between this language of the holy doctor and certain passages of his letters! His friend St. Basil was subject to the same influence. After his baptism he regretted as a dream all the time he had consumed in literary and philosophical studies: "I awoke," said he, "as from a profound sleep; and from the time the light of the Gospel came to enlighten my eyes, I saw the vanity of human science and wisdom. . . . Since I have conversed with Moses and Elias," he writes to Libanius, "and have received from their rude language the lessons I must transmit to my brothers, I have completely forgotten what I learnt at your school." ³¹ According to the influence that such men as Athanasius, Basil, and the two Gregories exercised in the Church, we may judge of the general bent before the end of the fifth century.³²

²⁹ Epist. 199.

³⁰ *Elog. de St. Athan.* See the work of the Abbé Lalanne, *De l'Influence des Pères*, etc. p. 68.

³¹ Epist. 339.

³² Lalanne, p. 69.

From the commencement of the fifth century there was perfect unanimity in this great question. Their eyes were opened to the danger of profane teaching: "The repugnance of most Christians," as St. Gregory says, "was acknowledged to be well founded. It was henceforth understood that a complete triumph of the Gospel and of Christian morals over the idolatry and corrupt morals of the Greeks and Romans could not be expected whilst the rising generations drew their ideas, fed their imaginations, and formed their judgment from the works of antiquity. A new moral, new laws, a new world, could only come out of a new literature." ³³ "How was it possible," says a modern philosopher, "to ally Christianity to the heritage of the ancient people? The ancient traditions, the remembrance of great acts, and of ancestors who had acquired such renown and influence over their descendants, *led minds in one direction*, whilst Christianity and its promises *led them in another*." ³⁴

Three great champions, St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine, were raised up by God to close the pagan school and open a new era. All three attacked pagan classics as being useless as to philosophy, vain as to literature, and dangerous as to morals, the very points for which they have been lauded since the *Renaissance*.

"With what evil, then," writes the first, "are we menaced if we ignore the *belles-lettres* (that is, profane literature)? It is not only amongst us, who laugh at all this vain knowledge, at this art that is strange to us, that the *lettres* are worthless. Philosophers who do not belong to us do not value them . . . This, however, has not prevented their acquiring a great celebrity . . . How much, therefore, should we not be to blame, enlightened as we are by faith, if we attach so much importance to a talent disdained even by those who feed upon the mind, and if, to acquire a thing so vain, we risk that which alone is necessary? . . . The apostles, and a great number of holy persons, who have not studied this literature, have not the less converted the world, whilst no philosopher has, as yet, converted a single tyrant." . . . After having exposed all the dangers of this study, he adds: "Would it not be the last degree of cruelty to throw poor children, unable to defend themselves, into the arena, amidst so many enemies?" ³⁵

³³ Ibid., p. 74.

³⁴ Ritter, *Hist. Philo.* tom. iv. c. 19.

³⁵ Nullus est qui se ita facturum polliceatur. Cum vero nullus sit, summæ crudelitatis esset eum, qui ne seipsum quidem defendere possit, sed jaceat innumeris confossus vulneribus, aliosque infirmiores reddat, in medio concidi permittere, cum oporteret eum a pugna summovere. — *Adv. Oppugn. vit. Monast.* lib. iii. n. 12, 13, *Opp.* tom. i. pp. 118-121.

The second seems to have written his admirable treatise, *De Doctrina Christiana*, to give young Christians a permanent disgust for pagan classics. "In the midst," says M. Lalanne, "of the excellent counsel that the holy doctor gives on eloquence, we are at first struck that he neither cites nor names any profane author . . . Instead of recommending, as our rhetoricians do, the works of Cicero, Demosthenes, Titus Livius, he passes them entirely over, and adds: 'We do not want for ecclesiastical writers independently of those which the Holy Ghost has inspired, from which a man of capabilities may draw, without effort, by only reading them attentively, models of eloquence, so that he need do nothing else but exercise himself, in order to write, dictate, or speak, as his piety shall inspire him.'"³⁶

As to St. Jerome, he was, as is well known, the Origen of his time, the savant in whom was to be found a summary of the ecclesiastical learning of past ages.³⁷ He had studied the pagan masters deeply, and was highly instructed when he devoted himself entirely to the service of religion. In the force of his age, and in the midst of the most laborious studies, he wrote to Pope Damasus, in reference to that verse in the history of the prodigal son, where it is said that the young man would fain have eaten the husks that were thrown to the swine: "One may understand by the nourishment of the swine the false philosophy of the world, the vain eloquence of oratory. Their cadence and harmony, in flattering the ear, possess the mind, and enchant the heart; but after one has read works of this kind with great attention, nothing is left but vacancy and confusion. Let us not delude ourselves by saying we do not put any faith in the fable, with which these authors have filled their writings. This reason does not justify us, since we scandalize others who think we approve of what they see us read."³⁸ In the course of this work, we shall cite from the same holy doctor other passages as precise, and much more severe.

To resume, in a few lines, this discussion on pagan classics, during the first ages of the Church, we will say, with the learned author we have already cited: "After this great and miraculous revolution, brought about by men of whom we may say, *Infirma mundi elegit Deus, ut confundat fortia*, Christianity was represented by its propagators with all the *prestige*, with all the *éclat* of letters and science, such as the pagans admired. The conqueror put on the arms of his vanquished enemy, of which he stood in need during a moment of defense and

³⁶ *De Doctr. Christ.* lib. iv. n. 4-7.

³⁷ Quo Latinus orbis nil habet doctius. — Erasm. epist. i. v. 19.

³⁸ Epist. 146, *ad Damas. De Duob. Filiis.*, Lalanne, p. 102.

FIRST EPOCH

attack. He made use of them, and taught his followers how to handle them. But soon feeling strange in this armor, which, not being made for him, galled and inconvenienced him, he took it off piece by piece; or, not attaching any value to it, he left it unnoticed. In the presence of the colossus of barbarism, he entered the lists plainly clad, and with the Cross for his only arm, like the young shepherd who went forth with a sling to overthrow the giant; both placed their confidence in God.”³⁹

From the sixth century to the middle of the fifteenth, the pagan classics were not used in education, or at least only in a manner altogether secondary. “At the beginning of the fifth century, we meet with three great men, heirs to the philosophy and literature of the epoch, worthy to close the brilliant legion that had so adorned the Church. We have seen them, as it were, give the signal to posterity to desert the literary temples of Greece, the porticos and academies of Athens, and of the museums of Corinth and Paphos, and with a courageous hand precipitate the world into a momentary darkness, that it might no longer be misled by the false light of paganism.”⁴⁰

Providence seconded their efforts by the great events that occurred. The Roman Empire, with its monuments, its arts, and its books, perished under the hand of the barbarian. At the same time a great pontiff became the creator of a new literature, which was the perfect expression of Christian society, which alone had remained standing amongst the ruins. This pontiff was St. Gregory, of whom we shall frequently have occasion to speak in the course of our researches.

³⁹ Lalanne, p. 108.

⁴⁰ Id. id.

CHAPTER VI.
SECOND EPOCH.

WE have seen what was the system of instruction adopted by Christians during the first epoch, that is, during the first five Centuries of the Church. We are now about to study the *second epoch*, which embraces the whole of the Middle Ages.

On carefully examining the monuments that remain to us, we find the same method, save that the pagan authors are still less read, and, indeed, disappear entirely from the number of the classics. In fact, the reason for studying them has not the same value.

Greco-Roman paganism is vanquished, — vanquished in its tyrants and philosophers, in its ideas and facts. The Christian motive for reading these authors has disappeared; the worldly pretext for studying them has not yet been invented. Mistress of the field of battle, the Church can henceforth accomplish, in all its plenitude, her great mission to renew the face of the Earth.

Around her press the robust children of the north, half-savage conquerors of the old world. This hard granite must be worked and polished; these proud Sicambres must be softened and civilized: such is her only care, and such will be her glory.

The Church knows that civilization is but Christianity applied to society; she knows that this application, to be efficacious and lasting, must begin with childhood; she knows that childhood is irrevocably formed by education; she knows that education depends upon the mold in which the generations are cast, — that they are pagan or Christian, according as the world itself is pagan or Christian; she knows, in fine, that the rude element she must fashion can only be operated upon by the exclusive, the constant action of Christianity.

The dominant spirit of these great ages is found in the remarkable words of a saint who exercised a great influence on the march of mind; it may be called a new promulgation of the Apostolic Constitutions. In the life of St. Eligius, his colleague in the episcopate, St. Ouen, bishop of Rouen, thus expresses himself: “What profit shall we derive from the reading of certain grammarians, who appear to cast down rather than to

build up? In philosophy, of what use to us are Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle? For what purpose should we read the songs of criminal poets, such as Homer, Virgil, and Menander? Of what use to a Christian family are those pagan historians Sallust, Herodotus, and Livius? What oratory of Lysias, Gracchus, Demosthenes, and Tullius, can be compared to the pure and beautiful doctrines of Christ? Of what utility to us is the ability of Flaccus, Solinus, Varro, Democrates, Plautus, Cicero, and others, whom it is unnecessary to name?" — *Vit. B. Elig. Prol. vers. fin.* During this second epoch, all the classics are Christian. This important fact has never been denied; in fact, it has been made the text of constant reproach against our ancestors during the past three centuries. This will be examined later; at present we will continue.

The Latin tongue remained, at least during a part of the Middle Ages, the vulgar tongue of the ancient inhabitants of Europe;¹ in the ninth century the Greek even appears to have been generally known.² Thanks to this fortunate circumstance, parents were able to retain their children much longer under the shelter of their own roof than they are in our days. There, as in the first ages, the minds of children were nourished with the holy books, *The Acts of the Martyrs*, the works of the fathers, the legends of the saints, the recital in turn, simple and epic, of the great actions of the knights, the crusaders, the pilgrims; of the illustrious founders of religious orders, whose names were as popular as their works were sublime. This is what we discover from contemporaneous monuments; this is proved by the religious stamp so deeply imprinted in the language, and even the simple customs of the inhabitants of the country, as well as those of the towns.

It was not only around the domestic hearth that the child read these admirable classics; he found them written in shining characters on the windows and on the walls of the churches; and as in those times everybody went to the churches, and went often, this kind of reading formed the popular classics. Hence the custom, still practiced in many families, of teaching the children to read from an illustrated Bible. In many parts of France, and indeed throughout Europe, it is still the custom to read every evening *The Acts of the Martyrs*, and the lives of the saints, to the assembled family.

¹ Il Latino idioma era in gran parte vivente, e s' intedeva e parlava generalmente per tutta l' Europa, ed in esso scrivevansi le carte pubbliche, le leggi, e i libri privati, del qual comune Latino linguaggio dei saggi fino ai di nostri ne restano in Germania, in Ungheria, in Polonia. — Battini, tom. i. c. xiii. p. 166.

² At Poitiers the public acts were written in Greek in the ninth century. — *Mém. de la Soc. des Ant. de l'Ouest*, 3 vols.

On quitting the family, the youths who were destined for the church entered the public schools. It is well known that at this epoch the face of Europe was covered with places of public instruction; they abounded in France, Spain, England, Ireland, and Italy, either in the country presbyteries, the monasteries, the cathedrals, or the episcopal mansions.³ There children of a tender age, from the different classes of society, were brought together, and all received an education in common, however different the careers they were intended to follow might be. Would you know the books that were placed in their hands, read the beautiful letters of St. Jerome to Leta and Eustochium, and you will see with what admirable care the Middle Ages preserved the pedagogic rules of the first ages of the Church.

Education commenced around the domestic hearth, was continued by ecclesiastical literature, that is, all that relates to religion, — its history, its glories, its doctrine. The principal classics were *The Acts of the Martyrs*, or, as they were then called, *the Book of the Passions*, — *Liber Passionum*, a book more calculated than any other to develop in the young soul all those noble sentiments of the faith, disinterestedness, generosity, and courage, which form great characters and a great people. Hence it was that this golden book was sought after at great cost, and placed at the head of the richest libraries. This was in conformity with the custom of the first Christians, who did not shrink before any expense or danger, to procure *The Acts of the Martyrs*, which they read with great avidity.

One of the glories of Great Britain, Acca, successor to the illustrious Wilfrid, archbishop of Canterbury, became celebrated for the magnificent library he collected. *The Acts of the Martyrs* is the first book mentioned by his immortal historian.⁴ To the Book of the Passions was added the holy Scriptures, particularly the Psalms, which were generally learnt by heart, as is the case amongst ourselves, with the fables of Phædrus, or the *Poetic Art* of Horace. The detailed accounts of certain educations leave no doubt as to the universality of this system. We will confine ourselves to some examples taken at hazard from amongst the different peoples of Europe. St. Boniface, writing an account of the life and martyrdom of St. Livinius, thus relates the manner in which he was brought up from his earliest years: — “This child,” says he, “endowed with excellent dispositions, chose the

³ Thomass. *De la Discipi. &c. des Ecoles*, p. 240 et seq.

⁴ Sed et Historias Passionum una cum cæteris ecclesiasticis voluminibus summa industria congregans, amplissimam sibi et nobilissimam bibliothecam fecit — Beda, lib. v. c. xxi.; Dom Ruinart, *Act. Martyr.* præf. pp. 2, 3.

contemplative life, and lived with St. Benignus, a Scottish priest, a man of distinguished birth. Seeking to be instructed by this priest in the *melody of the Psalms*, in the *sweet reading of the holy Gospels*, and other divine exercises, his youth flowed on according to his desires, so that, as if he were in an immense garden of heavenly beauty, he advanced, day by day, mounting all the steps of virtue. His intelligence was wonderfully developed, and by the co-operation of grace, he found no difficulty in the study of so many divine things, nor in *the practice of the examples of the just.*"⁵ It is related of St. Patrick, that the mother of the young Lananus having brought her son to him to be instructed, the holy man confided him to the blessed Cassanus, and the child in a short time learnt the whole Psalter, and afterwards became a man of most edifying life.⁶ Speaking of the young Leobard, of an illustrious family, St. Gregory of Tours says, "The time being come, he was sent to school, where he *learnt the whole Psalter by heart.*"⁷ The same thing is related of St. Nizier, bishop of Lyons, who rendered the same service to other children.⁸

In the study of the sacred books the same prudence was observed, of which St. Jerome traces the rules in writing to Leta. Penetrated with respect for the child, the Church removed from him; even in the sacred books themselves, whatever might alarm his innocence or fatigue his imagination; the works of the Fathers served at once as models of eloquence and commentaries to the divine writings. Here again we find the same course as in the first ages of the Church, when the reading of the letters of the sovereign pontiffs and of the bishops formed the intellectual nourishment of the faithful.⁹

⁵ *Vit. B. Livin.* p. 258.

⁶ *Ages of Faith*, p. 225.

⁷ Qui tempore debito ad scholam cum reliquis pueris missus, quempiam de psalmis memoriæ commendavit, et nesciens se clericum esse futurum, jam ad dominicum parabatur innocens ministerium. — *Vit. Patr.* c. 20.

⁸ Summa nutritum diligentia litteris ecclesiasticis mandavit institui genitrix. — *Id.* c. 8. In his turn St. Nizier gave the same instruction to *all* the children of the house he inhabited. Illud omnino studebat, ut omnes pueros qui in domo ejus nascebantur, ut primum vagitum infantia relinquentes, loqui cœpissent, statim litteras doceret, ac psalmis imbueret. — *Id.* *id.* We only know of one exception to this method, that is, the education of St. Fulgentius; this is explained by the particular circumstances by which his childhood was surrounded, and the views of his parents towards their child. — Thomass. *supra.*

⁹ Discat primo Psalterium, his se Canticis avocet; et in Proverbiis Salomonis erudiat ad vitam. In Ecclesiaste consuescat, quæ mundi sunt calcare. In Job virtutis et patientiæ exempla sectetur. Ad Evangelia transeat, nunquam ea positura de manibus. Apostolorum Acta et Epistolas, tota cordis imbibat voluntate. Quumque pectoris sui cellarium his opibus locupletaverit mandet memoriæ Prophetas, Heptateuchum, et

The treatises on the arts and sciences were next explained. The arts and sciences were studied, not as an end, but as a means, — a means, not to prosperity, but to spiritual and temporal perfection, and for the good of religion. Thus we see that in the learned schools of England, established by the illustrious Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury, geometry, astronomy, and mathematics in general, were so taught, in a religious point of view, that they bore the names of *ecclesiastical* geometry, astronomy, and mathematics. It was the same with painting, sculpture, architecture, and poetry; for all these things were established to serve to the glory of their author.¹⁰

Foreign languages were also taught, either to profit by the treasures of religious science in other countries, or to be able to preach the gospel in the East and West. They were for this double cause an object of particular care; many, indeed, spoke them as their mother tongue.¹¹ History relates that King Gontram was received at Orleans by a band of men who sang his praises in Syriac, Latin, and Hebrew.¹² Latin was spoken, particularly in Rome, in the palace of St. Gregory, with admirable perfection.¹³ We shall see, later, that the council of Vienna solemnly ordained that chairs of all the oriental languages should be erected in the different

Regum et Paralipomenon libros, Ezræ quoque et Esther volumina. Ad ultimum sine periculo discat Canticum Canticorum, ne si in exordio legerit sub carnalibus verbis, spiritualium nuptiarum epithalamium, non intelligens vitlneretur. Caveat omnia apocrypha. — Hier. *Epist. ad Læt.* Opp. tom. iv. p. 596. Merito isti libri prohibiti sunt legere carnalibus; hoc est, Heptateuchum et Canticum Canticorum; nedum eos spiritualiter nesciunt, libidinis ac voluptatum incitamento solvantur. — S. Bened. *Regul. c. v. 7.* Indubitanter, ascendamus ad divinam Scripturam per expositiones probabiles Patrum. — Cassiod. *ap. Sur.* 28 Nov. Baron. an. 562, n. 13.

¹⁰ Et quia litteris simul ecclesiasticis et sæcularibus abundanter ambo (Theodorus et Adrianus) erant instructi, congregata discipulorum caterva, scientiæ salutaris quotidie flumina in rigandis eorum cordibus emanabant; ita ut etiam metricæ artis, astronomiæ et arithmeticiæ ecclesiasticæ disciplinam, inter sacrorum apicum volumina suis auditoribus contraderent. — Beda, lib. iv. cc. 1, 2.

¹¹ Indicio eat, quod usque hodie supersunt de eorum discipulis, qui Latinam Græcamque linguam, æque ut propriam in qua nati sunt, norunt. — Id. id.

¹² Processit ei obviam immensa turba cum signis atque vexillis, canentes laudes, et hinc lingua Syriaca, hinc Latinorum, hinc etiam ipsorum Judæorum in diversis laudibus vane concrepabat. — S. Greg. Turon. *Hist.* lib. viii. c. 1.

¹³ Videbantur passim cum eruditissimis clericis adhærere pontifici (S. Gregorio Magno) religiosissimi monachi . . . Tunc rerum sapientia Romæ sibi templum visibiliter quodammodo fabricarat, et septemPLICIBUS artibus veluti columnis nobilissimum totidem lapidum, Apostolicæ Sedis atrium fulciebat. Nullus pontifici famulantium barbarum quodlibet in sermone vel habitu præfererat; sed togata Quiritium more, vel trabeata Latinitas suum Latium in ipso Latiali palatio singulariter obtinebat. Refloruerunt ibi diversarum artium studia. — Joan. Diacon. in *Vit. S. Greg.* lib. i. cc. 12, 13.

universities of Europe. We will say nothing of the moral sciences, and more particularly philosophy, for it is evident they were all regarded as the servants of theology, as St. Thomas, whose works, not less than those of the doctors of the Middle Ages, are a magnificent proof of this grand definition, calls them.

We will now give the program of the studies during these pretended barbarous ages. Traced by Marcianus Capella, who was an African rhetorician in the fifth century, this program remained the same for eleven centuries.¹⁴ At ten years began the studies according to rule; they were divided into two periods of five years each. During the first they went through the *Trivium*, which comprised grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric: for a long time these studies were not considered depreciated under the modest appellation of *trivial*. To the grammar belonged the study of languages. On the borders of the Loire, at Angers, Orleans, and Poitiers, all known cultivated languages, not excepting the oriental, were to be found. The dialectic wisely preceded the rhetoric, which was not then what it has since become, a kind of digression between grammar and philosophy, — the art of expressing ideas to be acquired later.

According to the aptitude and progress of the pupils, to the *Trivium* succeeded the *Quadrivium*, which initiated them in the higher branches of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. Now all these detached elements were connected by a powerful and harmonious synthesis. To explain, we will borrow the terms of the ancients, according to whom, the education of the man, like the formation of the world, was reduced to two things, — the word and number; and to two ends, which embraced all, — eloquence and wisdom.

Three ways led to eloquence, — the art of speaking correctly, thinking justly, and expressing it well; or the word elaborated by grammar, sharpened by dialectic, and embellished by rhetoric. The word in its purity, its force, and its beauty — such is eloquence.¹⁵

The road to wisdom, or, which is the same thing, to science, was much longer and more difficult. However, all resumed itself into number; but there was number multiplied or decomposed into an infinity of combinations, called arithmetic, represented by unity; there was the abstract number, which is absolute, immutable in its ideal extent, or geometry, whose emblem is *binary*; there was the number

¹⁴ *De Nuptiis Philologiæ et Mercurii*, etc. in 4to. edit. de Frankfurt, 1836. Accurante doct. Kopp.

¹⁵ *Trivium* quasi triplex via ad idem, id est ad eloquentiam. *Quadrivium*, quasi quatuor viæ ad idem, id est ad sapientiam. — Balb. in *Cathol. Acta S. Maxim.* Prolog.

that moves through created spaces, brings the celestial bodies and the world into the orb of an immense vortex, — astronomy, whose symbol is a *sphere*. In fine, to the seven chords of the lyre one is still wanting. When all these chords are struck together, harmony awakes in the soul, music makes itself heard, like the concerts which Pythagoras heard in the distant world and in the depths of his soul. This completed the man; it was the consummation of wisdom. Thus was formed this ladder of human development, the two signs of which were, the *word* and *wisdom*; and the seven steps, those liberal arts which constitute man raised to his true value — the eloquent sage: *Vir bonus dicendi peritus*.¹⁶

For depth and harmony, what are the modern systems of instruction compared to this? This, however, was but the general mold into which all minds were cast; afterwards came the peculiar teaching for each, according to his situation in life: this was given in the universities. In conformity to the spirit of the Fathers of the Church and the rules laid down by these immortal men, pagan literature, even, was studied at a suitable age, in order that the spoils of Egypt might serve to ornament the sanctuary. Thus we find that adolescence, and not childhood, was allowed to touch this cup, the brim of which is gold, but its contents poison. And adolescence, nay, even the masters themselves, only touched it in passing, and with the greatest precautions.¹⁷

¹⁶ D. Pitra, *Vie de S. Leger*, p. 63; Greg. Tur. *Hist. Franc.* lib. ix. 19; Galland, *Biblioth. Patr.* tom. xi. p. 161. The plan of study is found with new developments in *institution* in the divine letters of Cassiodorus. This illustrious Roman senator, consul, and prætorian prefect, after fifty years of labor in the government of the kingdom of Italy, embraced the monastic life at the age of seventy years, and labored thirty years more to leave to future ages the treasures of antique literature. In his plan of study, or rather in his program for a Catholic university, what predominates is the science of God and divine things. All human sciences serve and conduct to this, and on that account merit to be cultivated.

Before all come the Scriptures, with the principal commentaries of the Fathers of the Church. After these, the acts of the four general councils of Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon. Cassiodorus here recommends the reading of the various histories which bear any relation to religion; such as the *Jewish Antiquities*, by Josephus; the *Ecclesiastical History*, by Eusebius; that of Sozomenus, of Theodoret, of Orosius; the *Catalogue of Illustrious Men*, by St. Jerome, but, above all, the *Lives of the Fathers* and the *Acts of the Martyrs*. Cosmography and geography being useful to religion, Cassiodorus recommends the study of the best authors. He also counsels the study of profane literature, provided it be with moderation, and with the view of better understanding the sacred writings. To complete his plan, à *l'institution aux lettres divines*, Cassiodorus added his *Treatise on the Seven Liberal Arts*, with the view of perfecting man, and raising him towards God. — *Hist. Uuivers. de l'Egl.* tom. ix. pp. 178-189.

¹⁷ St. Gregory of Tours writes the following of St. Oustrille, who was destined to live at the court of King Gontram: — Cum in pueritia sacris litteris fuisset institutus, in obsequio regis deputatur a patre. — *Vit. Pctr.* lib. iv. c. 46. And of the son of a senator:

If in some places the rules, the wisdom of which the ills we now suffer from will not permit any one to doubt, were not strictly observed, the cry of alarm was immediately raised, and an explanation demanded. The Supreme Pontiff, the great sentinel of Israel, was warned, all returned to the usual course, and Europe continued to draw the beautiful from the same source from which she drew the true, the good, and the just.¹⁸

Let us terminate by some details which will be useful in the present day. Churchmen, and the good monks generally, devoted to education, acquitted themselves with a fidelity which assured success, and but little resembled the conduct of those men who make the official instruction subservient to their own ends.

The life of the ecclesiastic, or of the religious destined for instruction, was a life of study. No family care, no pre-occupation of worldly things, no external solicitude, divided his thoughts; prayer and preparation for teaching his pupils was his sole occupation. The holy canons, the rules of the monastery, were to him a duty of conscience; in default of other proof, this alone must show the immense superiority of their teaching.¹⁹

— De operibus Virgilii, legis Theodosianæ libris, arteque calculi adprime eruditus est. — Id. Gentilium libros vel hæreticorum volumina monachus legere caveat. Melius est enim eorum perniciosam dogmata penitus ignorare, quam per experientiam in aliquem laqueum erroris incurrere. — *S. Bened. Reg.* c. ix. Omnes omnino pontifices a lectione librorum gentilium Gregorius inhibebat. — Joan. Diac. *in Vit.* lib. iii. c. 33.

¹⁸ Gravissimo dolore permotus, writes the illustrious Cassiodorus, quod scripturis divinis magistri publici deessent, dum majori laude humanæ litteræ edocerentur . . . nisus sum cum beato Agapito urbis Romæ ut sicut apud Alexandriam . . . et in Nisibi civitate . . . collatis expensis in urbe Romana professos doctores scholæ potius acciperet Christianæ, unde anima susciperet æternam salutem et casto atque purissimo eloquio fidelium lingua comeretur. He did not entirely interdict profane literature, but only insisted that it should hold but a secondary rank, and that the children should continue, as had been the case hitherto, to be nourished on the Scriptures and the Fathers: — Per quos et Scripturarum divinarum series, et *sæcularium litterarum compendiosa notitia* panderetur. — Sur. 28 Nov. We shall see further on, the letter of St. Gregory to Bishop Didier, by which he forbids him to make pagan works the classics for youth. The following is an extract: — Pervenit ad nos fraternitatem tuam, grammaticam quibusdam exponere. Quam rem ita moleste suscipimus, ac sumus vehementius aspernati, ut ea quæ prius dicta fuerunt, in gemitum et triatitiam verteremus; quia in uno se ore cum Jovis laudibus Christi laudes non capiunt. Et quam grave nefandumque sit episcopis canere, quod nec laico religioso conveniat, ipse considera. — Lib. ix. epist. 49.

¹⁹ Nulli liceat episcoporum diaconum aut presbyterum ordinare, litteras ignorantem; sed si qui ordinati fuerint cogantur discere. — *Conc. Narb.* an. 589, can. 11. Ad sacra mysteria tractanda solus is accedat, quem morum innocentia et litterarum splendor reddunt illustrem. — *Conc. Tolet.* viii. can. 8. Lectio tibi sit assidua, jugisque oratio. Dividantur tibi tempora et officia, ut postquam legeris ores; postquam oraveris, legas.

As regards their zeal in preserving the innocence of their pupils, what a difference between the religious and the professors of our own days! At present, education is entirely abandoned to masters of studies. Formerly, the masters never quitted their charge by day or by night. What can be more touching, and at the same time more instructive, than the following directions of the councils of Tours and Toledo. "The religious and the clerks," say they, "to whom is confided the education of children, will be careful that the young persons of fifteen years and over lodge together, and sleep in one common room, without ever being left an instant by their director or master. During the night, reading shall be continued, in order that the same precaution taken to preserve the purity of the body may serve also to enlighten the soul."²⁰

In the present day we can only approach the establishments for education at the price of money: during the *barbarous* centuries of the Middle Ages knowledge cost nothing — it was given; and these greedy monks, besides giving them their instruction, provided the children of the poor with books, and fed them; without which they could not have continued their studies.²¹

On leaving the schools established in the presbyteries, in the monasteries, in the cathedrals, and even in the dwellings of the bishops, the youths went to the universities. In the great centers of light, with which religion had so magnificently endowed ancient Europe, the spirit of instruction was the same as around the domestic hearth and in the elementary schools; men and books, all were Christian. Aristotle alone had, permit us the expression, the right of free trade, and obtained the privilege of a great popularity. But this philosopher was not put into the

— *S. Isid. Hispal. Regul. c. 6-7.* Ante omnia sane deputentur unus aut duo seniores, qui circumeant monasterium horis cuibus vacant fratres lectioni; et videant ne forte inveniatur frater desidiosus, qui vacat otio, aut fabulis, et non est intentus lectioni. — *S. Bened. Reg. c. 48.*

²⁰ Ad hoc constituendum oportuit, ut si qui puberes aut adolescentes existunt, omnes in uno conclavi atrii commorentur, ut lubricæ ætatis annos non in luxuria, sed in disciplinis ecclesiasticis agant, deputati probatissimo seniori, quem et magistrum disciplinæ et testem vita, habeant. — Conc. Tolet. xi. can. 43. Sed schola labore communi construator; ubi omnes jaceant, aut abbate aut præposito gubernante, ut dum duo, vel tres vicissim legant et excubent, alii consolentur; ut non solum sit custodia corporum, sed et surgat pro lectione assidua profectus animarum. — Conc. Turon. xi. c. 14.

²¹ Multi nobilium simul et mediocrium de gente Anglorum, vel divinæ lectionis, vel continentioris vitæ gratia, illo secesserant. Et quidam mox se monasticæ conversationi mancipiarunt; alii magis circumeundo per cellas magistrorum, lectioni operam dare gaudebant. Quos omnes Scotti libentissime suscipientes, victum eis quotidianum sine pretio, libros quoque ad legendum, et magisterium gratuitum præbere curabant. — Beda, lib. iii. c. 27.

hands of children, nor was he ever studied either for his ideas or for his style of oratory; he was read solely for his dialectic method. The interests of religion inspired our fathers; and this no thinking man can hesitate to admit.

At the risk of giving scandal, we assert that the dialectic has many claims to our particular esteem. The first is, because of the evil the heretics have spoken against it, which is not a little. The second is, on account of the great benefit it has rendered to the human mind, and to truth. The human mind owes to it that firm step and power of deduction which prevents it losing itself in vagueness, and gives to our modern languages the most precious of all their qualities, precision: an immense advantage which ancient languages never possessed. It has furnished arms to truth, by which to repulse error, as well as to unmask and to entangle it in its own nets, by reducing its prolix aberrations into the concise and inexorable form of syllogism.

The works, however, of Aristotle were not without danger; they gave rise to several errors justly condemned by the Bishop of Paris, Stephen Tempier, in 1277: "We have learned," says he, "that some students in philosophy, passing the bounds of their faculty, have dared to sustain manifest errors or rather chimerical extravagancies. They find these propositions in the books of pagans, and they appear so demonstrative that they do not know how to reply to them. In endeavoring to palliate them, they fall into another difficulty; for they say they are true according to philosophy, that is, according to Aristotle, but not according to the Catholic faith, as if two contradictory truths existed!"²²

We will briefly recapitulate the foregoing. From this short statement results the fact we wish to establish: that during the period of the Middle Ages the classic works in use were exclusively Christian. From the beginning of the Church to the sixteenth century, the opinion of the Fathers and the sages was that the pagan literature did not suit either the spirit or the genius of the Christian religion, and thus it was necessary to study that which sprung from Christianity, which was its expression, and breathed its spirit. "True Latinity," says St. Prosper, "is, if I mistake not, that which, retaining the propriety of the terms of the ancient Latin, expresses the thing briefly and simply, and not that which plays upon the beauty of the form."²³ It is to the eternal glory of

²² Præsertim cum errores prædictos gentilium scripturis inveniunt, quos, proh dolor! ad suam imperitiam asserunt. Sic cogentes ut eis nesciant respondere . . . dicunt enim ea esse nota et vera secundum philosophum, sed non secundum fidem Catholicam, quasi sint duæ veritates contrariæ, et quasi contra veritatem sacræ Scriptura, sit veritas in dictis gentilium. — *Biblioth. Patr.* an. 1277.

²³ Est ea, ni fallor, judicata Latinitas quæ breviter et aperte, observata *dumtaxat*

Gregory the Great, that he established by his writings this Christian Latin, of which the Fathers had laid the foundation; a language so lucid, rich, and simple, elegant, and full of unction, differing from the pagan Latin as much as night from day, or Christianity from paganism. The illustrious Pontiff did not stop here; uniting his efforts to those of St. Isidore of Seville, he neglected nothing in order that the children might learn Latin solely from Christian authors; which was the case, as we have already seen.

In default of the proofs that have been given above, we may arrive at the same fact from this simple observation: in spite of any effort on our part, we retain, in after-life, the style, the thoughts, the diction of the authors we have studied in our childhood, as the vessel long retains the odor of the first liquor it has received: "*Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem testa diu.*"

Thus St. Jerome and St. Augustine, though they both energetically condemned the pagan classics, displayed in their style something of the pagan authors with which they had been familiarized in their youth, whilst, on the other hand, from St. Gregory to St. Bernardin of Sienna, from St. Antony of Florence to St. Laurence Justinian (writers of the fifteenth century, equally celebrated for their eloquence and the gravity of their works), no Christian author displays anything that bears any resemblance to the pagan writers. This is an evident proof that all learnt Latin in their childhood, not from the profane, but the Christian authors. From this arises that taste, that ardent love for the Holy Scriptures and the ancient Fathers, they preserved during their lives, and which is found, not only amongst ecclesiastics, but also with lay persons, and even women. As to the pagan works, they only received a secondary attention, and were read by persons of a riper age, and that, not to form their style, but solely, according to the example of the early Christians, to cull whatever might serve to embellish Christian truth.

Such was the arrangement of study from the commencement of the Church till the end of the fifteenth century.

The result of this was that philosophy, literature, and the sciences, animated with the same spirit as theology, walked with her in the way of Christian truth, each one following out its development according *to its kind*, and by means exclusively Christian. Thus we find that all the books of this epoch, but more particularly those published by the *Trecentisti*, Boccaccio excepted, are upon Christian history, or Christian

verborum proprietate, res intelligendas enuntiat; non quæ vernantis eloquii venustate luxuriunt.

or national subjects: these latter are also Christian; for the love of country and a desire for its glory are Christian duties.

The arts present the same spectacle. There does not exist a single sculpture or picture of this epoch, the subject of which is mythological, pagan, obscene, or even exclusively profane. The attentive traveler who visits Venice may prove, by the testimony of his own eyes, what we advance. This city may be considered as the greatest museum of Christian art. On visiting its countless monuments of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, nothing will be found relating to mythology or paganism; nothing obscene, shameful, or profane. Nay, more; the bronzes, the marble sculptures, the magnificent pictures, that recall the great exploits of the Venetians against the Turks, are sufficient of themselves to prove that the heroic feats of arms represented were accomplished by Christians who belonged to a Christian republic.

Thus, the guides of this epoch, so unjustly calumniated, knew, like the fathers of the Church, that the only way to insure Christian generations, was to cast them in a Christian mold. It is not that these men, whom they have not feared to call barbarians, were unable to make use of profane works in the instruction of childhood, for they possessed them, and have preserved them to us; they also read them, and have transcribed them thousands of times; and since they read and transcribed them, doubtless they understood them.

But more, they knew how to appreciate them. In order to preserve them, they made sacrifices before which we should shrink. Thus, in the eighth century, a poor monk, named Loup, abbot of Ferrieres, wrote to all parts of Europe to procure manuscripts, in order to copy them, and correct those he already possessed: "Let it be well understood," added he, "that it shall be at my cost." He conjured Eginhard to send him the manuscripts of the *Orator* of Cicero, and the *Attic Nights* of Aulus Gellius; the bishop Heribod to send him the *Commentaries of Cæsar*. Of Ausbald he asked the manuscript of the *Letters of Cicero*; of Mercuadus, abbot of Prom, the manuscript of *Suetonius*, that he might have it copied; of Pope Benedict III., the *Commentaries of St. Jerome*, the *Institutions of Quintilian*, the *Commentaries of Donatus on Terence*, Sallust, and a number of others.²⁴

²⁴ Epist. Paris, 1538. Petimus etiam Tullium de Oratore, et duodecim libros Institutionum Oratoriarum Quintiliani, qui uno nec ingenti volumine continentur; quorum utriusque auctorum prates habemus, verum plenitudinem per vos desideramus obtinere. Pari intentione Donati Commentum in Terentium flagitamus; quæ auctorum opera si vestra liberalitas nobis largita fuerit, Deo annuente cum commemorato S. Hieronymi Codice fideliter omnino restituenda curabimus . . .

In the tenth century the celebrated Gerbert, at first a humble religious of Aurillac, afterward archbishop of Ravenna, and, in fine, pope, under the name of Sylvester II, was not less eager to preserve and to multiply the profane authors. Bishops and religious in France, Italy, Germany, and Belgium were put in requisition, and the generous Pontiff bought, at the price of their weight in gold, these works, which might have been given, as easily as the Christian authors, to the youths of those days, yet it was never done.²⁵ In the following ages we see the same zeal perpetuated throughout Europe, in Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury; Didier, abbot of Monte Cassino, afterwards Pope, under the title of Victor III; and in a crowd of others, a list of whose names would fill these pages.²⁶

Since society in the Middle Ages knew, studied, and appreciated the pagan authors, who dare maintain that she could not have proposed them as models to her youth, as well as have adopted them for herself? What was wanting for this? They possessed the works. Did they lack taste to admire them? What! these geniuses of the first order, who, during the period of the Middle Ages, and beyond, held so high and firmly the scepter of knowledge and eloquence, could not, if they had willed, have imitated the pagan language, the poetry of the pagans, their sculpture, and their architecture, as well as those who have arrogated to themselves the privilege for the last three centuries! What! could not St. Augustine, nor St. Jerome, nor St. Chrysostom, nor St. Bernard, nor Albert the Great, nor Dante, nor Petrarch, nor St. Bonaventure, nor St. Thomas, nor thousands of others, have given a pagan form to their writings, as well as the architects of our immortal cathedrals could have copied the straight lines of Athens and of Rome! If they have not done so, it is because they had too much good sense to commit such an error: they were too wise to resuscitate an exhausted form with the idea that attached to it; they had too much dignity to become servile and unskilled copyists. It was not the leading men of the epoch only who knew the profane authors. As in the first ages of the Church, the study

Catilinarium et Jugurthinum Sallustii, librosque verrinarium, et si aliquos alios vel corruptos nos habere vel penitus non habere, cognoscitis, nobis afferre dignemini, ut nostro beneficio et vitiosi corrigantur, vel non habiti . . . acquirantur. — Epist. 104 et 105.

²⁵ Cui rei præparandæ bibliothecam assidue comparo, et sicut Romæ dudum ac in aliis Italiæ partibus, in Germania quoque ac Belgica scriptores auctorumque exemplaria multitudine nummorum redemi. — Epist. 44, *ad Ecbert. abb. Turon.* Nosti quanto studio librorum exemplaria undique conquiram, nosti quot scriptores in urbibus aut in agris Italiæ passim habeantur. — Id. *ad Reginald. Monach.* epist. 130.

²⁶ Battini, tom. i. c. 9, p. 88 and following.

of them was permitted when it ceased to be dangerous; this study was allowed, and was even popular to a certain point. It will be sufficient for our purpose that we cite one example. In the beautiful strains of the immortal author of the *Divine Comedy*, the venerable Cacciaguیدا, Dante's great-grandfather, relates that the ladies of his time chatted over the Trojan war, the antiquities of Fiesole, and the great deeds of the Greeks and Romans, as they turned their distaff or rocked their children.²⁷

On examining the dates, it will be found that this took place in the eleventh century. Thus we see that the *Renaissance* did not, as has been pretended, discover the Greeks and Romans. They were already known and received by our good forefathers with a generous hospitality, only that in the Middle Ages they had the good taste and good sense to put everything in its place: Christianity in the first rank, paganism in the second; Christianity as the base and body of the edifice, and paganism as an accessory; Christianity as the mold, paganism the chasing; Christianity as the essential, paganism as the secondary form, which was dispensable without in any way injuring either the stability or the beauty of social order, or the progress of the human mind.

²⁷ L'una vegghiava al studio della culla,
 E consolando usava l' idioma
 Che pria li padri e le madri trastulla.
 L' altra traendo alla rocca la chioma,
 Favoleggiava con la sua famiglia
 De' Trojani, di Fiesole, e di Roma.
Paradis. Cant. xv.

CHAPTER VII.

THIRD EPOCH.

THE state of things as we have depicted them above, and which was so perfectly in harmony with reason and faith, unfortunately did not meet the approbation of those men who, knowingly or unknowingly, brought back paganism into Europe, and inaugurated the *third epoch* of our public education. We will give in a few words the history of this unparalleled revolution, the disastrous consequences of which we still feel.

Constantinople had fallen under the attacks of Mahomet II in 1453. The melancholy ruins of a nation scattered to the winds for having betrayed the faith of its fathers, the fugitive Greeks, arrived in the West. They brought with them in their flight the works of the pagan philosophers, of the poets, the orators, and the artists, of whom they were the fanatic admirers. Received by the Medicis, they returned their welcome by explaining the works of their ancient compatriots, and by exalting the glory of all that the pagan genius inspired: according to them, Europe had hitherto known nothing of literature, of eloquence, of philosophy, of poetry, or of the fine arts.

“Barbarians, instruct yourselves; no longer seek your models or your inspirations from the pretended great men, from your annals, from your religion. Pagan Rome, but more particularly pagan Greece, alone can offer masterpieces worthy of your contemplation. There was the monopoly of genius, of knowledge, and of eloquence; there were the men you ought to admire, but whom you can never equal: your glory will be to approach them; do not flatter yourselves you can do more: they have placed the Herculean columns for the human intellect.” Such were the exhortations of the new masters.

Undermined by the spirit of revolt, the sad fruit of the great schism in the West, Europe lent a willing ear to these new ideas, and saw in them a source of censure and of reproach to Catholicism. With all the heat of anger long repressed, she seized the opportunity to break the literary influence of the Church, awaiting the time when she might also set at naught her religious authority. A powerful echo replied to the

seducing voice of the new doctors. Nothing was seen but the pagans of Rome and Athens; their works were devoured; they were exalted to the skies; the ages of Augustus and of Pericles were alone the ages of enlightenment, all others were hidden under large zones of black ink by the Charles Dupin of the day. Nothing was beautiful or even supportable in language, or poetry, or eloquence, or painting, or sculpture, or in architecture, that did not bear the stamp of paganism. They blushed, not to have known it sooner; they determined to make amends by henceforth remodeling all after the image of antiquity. As much to spare the child unnecessary labor, as to insure success in this happy *Renaissance*, a pagan mold was hastily formed, and into it were poured the young generations. Away with Christian classics, *The Acts of the Martyrs*, the Scriptures, and the Fathers of the Church, who had formed their ancestors! The history of the Olympic gods, the fables of Phædrus and of Æsop, Quintus-Curtius, Ovid, Virgil, Horace, Homer, Xenophon, Demosthenes, Cicero, Aristophanes, these were henceforth to be the models of the young Christians, the sons of chevaliers and martyrs. "It will be a source of wonder to future ages," says a grave Protestant of our own times, "to learn that a society, calling itself Christian, should have devoted seven of the most precious years of its children to the exclusive study of pagans."¹ It is however true, that at the epoch of which we write there was a complete rupture of the traditional chain of teaching, a terrible deviation in the march of the human mind; in a word, a radical change in the education of youth.

There is another book still more classic, and if possible still more popular than print or manuscript: we speak of art in general. Exclusively dedicated to religion, it explained to the eyes of the learned and the ignorant the acts of the martyrs, the facts of Scripture, and the history of the saints: the varied and intelligible pages of this new book were to be found everywhere, from the church even to the hearth of the most humble cottage. Such was the second classic book, the second Christian mold of the young generations.

What had been done with respect to literature was soon extended to the arts. To the Christian type succeeded a type perfectly pagan; and childhood was made to approach it. Away with all the artistic glories of the ages of faith, all the magnificent monuments of architecture, of painting, of works in silver and gold with which Europe abounded! The mutilated temples of Greece and Italy, the statues, the vases, the columns, the triumphal arches, the half-ruined edifices of paganism, the frescoes of its palaces, the nudities of its villas and baths; these were for

¹ De Gasparin, *Des Instit. Gén. du Protest.*

the painter, the sculptor, the architect, and the goldsmith, the truly classic books, the types to be called really beautiful. Here, as in literature, enthusiasm was pushed to a point of delirium; it became an epidemic that reached the whole of Europe. Doubtless, with the view of directing it, Rome herself, in the person of the Popes of the house of Medicis, put itself at the head of the movement: the *Renaissance* enjoyed great favor in the capital of the Christian world. Without speaking of the eager cultivation of pagan literature, or of the princely honors lavished on the artist of the new school, all that led back to ancient paganism excited attention: the discovery of a vase or a statue was an event.

We have seen how the mold in which Europe had been formed for fifteen centuries, and from which it had come forth so heroic, so strong, so great in every way, and in a word so Christian, was broken. We will now return to our first assertion, and ask if we are still too positive? Has the change of the mold been less complete than we asserted?

During the two first epochs, the classics — that is, the literature and the arts — held up as models to childhood, were exclusively Christian. During the third epoch they have become exclusively pagan.

During the first two epochs the classics are *The Acts of the Martyrs*, Holy Scripture, and the Fathers of the Church; the pagan authors were only studied as an accessory, and at the age of adolescence.

During the third epoch, the classic works are the histories of the pagan gods, the fables of paganism, the books of the great men of paganism, — these have been from the first, and are still, studied principally, and even exclusively.

During the two first epochs, children remained long in the bosom of the family, where they were nourished with the pure milk of Christian truth; they only entered the schools to receive more substantial, but not more Christian, food. During the third epoch, the children quitted at an early age the domestic hearth, where they had already received nourishment that was half-pagan; thence they entered the public schools to receive nutriment wholly pagan.

During the two first epochs, the pagan authors were studied with a religious view only, and not as models of thought, of feeling, and of speaking. During the third epoch, the pagan authors are studied without any regard to religion, but merely as models of perfection in the art of thinking, of feeling, and of speaking; — could the change of system, the change of form, of the mold be more complete?

CHAPTER VIII.

SECOND OBJECTION ANSWERED. — TESTIMONY OF MEN.

IT may be said that what we have stated above is not convincing, and that, admitting a complete change, too much importance has been given to a simple form. The *Renaissance*, after all, is but a new form given to the old idea.

We will not stop to dispute as to whether the *Renaissance* be but a simple form, or something beyond. We will start from this fact, which will not be contested, — that the *Renaissance* is the introduction of paganism into education. Now, we contest that this is not merely a simple form; that it affects the principle, and that we in no way exaggerate the influence we attribute to it. In support of this assertion, we have the evidence of men and of fact.

In accusing us of exaggerating the influence of paganism in education, the accusation falls upon men whose authority is indisputable, — men whose probity places them above all suspicion, whose superiority commands respect, as well from their enemies as from their friends, — whose position was to enable them, better than all others, to bear testimony to facts long observed by them, — facts which they have touched with their hands, seen with their eyes, and to which many of them were victims. We have named the Fathers of the Church, the Fathers of Christian Europe, the most enlightened guides of nations, the princes of genius and of virtue.

Did they see nothing in pagan classics but a new form given to the same idea, a mode of education free from danger? Origen, speaking of these writers, but more particularly of the profane poets, did not fear to say that their works were so many cups, the edges of which were gilt, whilst they contained a deadly poison.¹ Happy for him if, always on his guard against works, the dangers of which he so eloquently pointed out,

¹ Unusquisque poetarum, qui putantur apud eos (Ethnicos) disertissimi, calicem aureum temperavit; et in calicem aureum venenum injecit. — Homil. 2 in *Hier.*

he had known how to avoid the poison of the pagan philosophers as well as he did those of the poets! But no, the great Origen, deceived by the philosophy of Plato, allowed himself to be led into a crowd of errors which scandalized the Church, and still leave some doubt as to his eternal salvation.

Would this companion in arms in the struggle for new-born Christianity, the immortal Tertullian, have looked upon the study of paganism by children as free from danger? — he who called the pagan philosophers the patriarchs of heretics, the corrupters of the doctrines of the Church? ² St. Irenæus, the learned apologist of religion, which he signed with his blood, is still stronger. The title by which he condemned pagan philosophy in the person of its most renowned advocate, Plato, that of *the framer of all heresies*, is well known.³

We have another witness not less irrefutable, — Lactantius, who long studied the *belles lettres*, and who better than any one knew the secret influence of classic books, affirms, as a thing well known in his time, that the faith was nowhere so weak as with those persons much given to pagan literature.⁴

In confirmation of the opinion of Lactantius, St. Ambrose energetically opposed those who, to give themselves to the study of pagan authors, neglected the Holy Scriptures. “It is no slight danger,” said he, “to leave the word of God for that of the world.” ⁵ If the danger was such for persons of mature age, what would it have been in the eyes of this great doctor to children whose tender and defenseless souls receive impressions with a facility equal to the tenacity with which they preserve them?

We will cite St. John Chrysostom, who thus expresses himself: — “I would not have you give to children the fables of mythology for their first lessons. . . . Commence by imprinting in their souls the principles of true wisdom: you will never gain so much by teaching them profane things which lead to fortune, as by instructing them in those things which lead them to despise them.” ⁶ Some families deviated from these rules, which, happily, however, were observed by the greater number, and the holy doctor cautioned them in the following terms: — “The first age you say is that of ignorance; yes, and do you not know that what

² Philosophi patriarchæ hæreticorum, ecclesiæ puritatem perversa maculavere doctrina. — *Apud S. Hier, ad Ctesiphont.*

³ Doleo Platonem fuisse omnium hæreseon condimentarium. — *De Hæres.*

⁴ Homines litterati minus credunt.

⁵ Non est mediocre periculum, cum habeas tanta eloquia Dei, illis prætermissis, loqui quæ seculi sunt. — *Serm. xxii. in Ps. cxviii.*

⁶ Homil. xxxi. in *Epist. ad Ephes.*

makes this ignorance more profound and more dangerous is the custom you have of giving it those histories of antique heroes which teach the child to admire them, though they gave themselves up to their passions . . . We shall gather the fruits of such an education, which peoples the world with passionate men, without restraint, without morals, accustomed as they are to mix in the mud of vice.”⁷

Saint Basil, again, is still more formal than St. Chrysostom. He wished that the young people should take the Christian principles for their point of departure, in order that they might judge wisely of the words, the acts, and the maxims of the pagans, which evidently suppose a great knowledge of religion already acquired. He adds, that the reading of profane authors is sovereignly dangerous, because they preach sensualism and teach us to admire men who are virtuous in words only.⁸

But the testimony of St. Jerome is more explicit and more grave than all the rest. With St. Augustine, he is perhaps the Father of the Church who studied the most, who best knew, and most justly judged, the pagan works, as well as the disastrous influence they are capable of exercising. Writing to Pope Damasus, who was himself highly versed in Latin literature, he cited the text of St. Paul, “*Dwell not in the temple of idols,*” to which he added, “Do you not hear the great St. Paul, who says in other words, ‘Do not read either the pagan philosophers, or the orators, or the poets; do not repose in the study of their works.’ Let us not be too confident that we shall not believe the things we read. It is a crime to drink at the same time of the chalice of Jesus Christ and that of the demons.”⁹ In other words, paganism and Christianity are incompatible: the one is sensual, the other spiritual; the one preaches

⁷ Vis filium esse obedientem? Ab initio eum educa in disciplina et admonitione Domini: ne existimes esse supervacaneum, quod ipse divinas litteras audiat: nam illic hoc primum audient: *Honora patrem et matrem*. Itaque propter te hoc fit . . . multa enim in illa ætate ignorantia; ignorantia autem fit accessio etiam *ex scriptis externorum*; quando per ea didicerint eos qui sunt heroes haberi in admiratione, cum sint servi animi, perturbationum, et vitiorum, et mortem timeant . . . Quomodo enim non est absurdum ad artes quidem mittere et ad luctum litterarium, et pro eo omnia facere: in disciplina autem et Dei admonitione pueros non educare? Propterea nos primi fructus percipimus, audaces, intemperantes, immorigeros, sordidos, et illiberales alentes filios. Ne hoc ergo faciamus . . . Educemus eos in disciplina et admonitione Domini: demus eis exemplum, *ab ineunte ætate curantes eos incumbere lectioni Scripturarum*. — In *Epist. ad Eph.* homil. xxi. n. 1 et 2, Opp. tom. xi. p. 183.

⁸ *De legendis Gentitium Libris*, tom. i. p. 245, n. 2 et 3.

⁹ *Epist. ad Damas, De duobus Filiis*.

all that the other condemns: there can be nothing in common between Jesus Christ and Belial.¹⁰

“I myself,” says he, elsewhere, “made the dangerous experiment, and these are the bitter fruits I have gathered from it. For several years I quitted the paternal roof; I deprived myself of the society of my parents, of my sister, and of my friends, and what is more difficult still, I renounced the use of delicate meats; and all this with the view of gaining heaven. Having the intention of going to Jerusalem to combat the cause of our Lord, I could not separate myself from the library I had formed with great difficulty at Rome. Thus, unfortunate that I am, I deprived myself of all, I fasted to read Cicero. After frequent night watchings, after abundant tears shed for my past faults, I took Plautus in hand. If at times, recovering my senses, I endeavored to read the prophets, their uncultivated style horrified me, and, because my weary eyes did not see the light, I believed it was the fault of the sun rather than of them.

“Whilst I was thus the toy of the old serpent, I was suddenly ravished in mind and dragged before the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge. Such was the brightness of the light that shone from his person, as well as from the angels which surrounded him, that I remained prostrate upon the ground, without daring to raise my eyes. Interrogated as to my position, I replied that I was a Christian. ‘Thou liest,’ replied the judge; ‘thou art Ciceronian and not Christian; for, where thy treasure is, there also is thy heart.’ At these words I was silent, and the Judge ordered me to be beaten; and the blows that I received were less cruel than the feelings of remorse with which my conscience was torn. I called to mind these words of the prophet: ‘*Who can praise thee in Hell?*’ However, I began to weep, and said, with sobs, ‘Lord, have pity on me.’ At length those who surrounded the throne threw themselves at the feet of the Judge, and asked forgiveness for my youth, and delay to do penance for my fault, saying that I would submit to the last punishment if I ever returned to the pagan authors. In this extremity, I myself made great promises; I swore, in invoking the name of God, that if I persisted in keeping my pagan books, I would submit to be considered as an apostate.

“This oath was scarcely pronounced when I was released and came to myself. To the great astonishment of those who surrounded me, when I opened my eyes they were drowned in tears, which alone was sufficient to convince them of the pain I had suffered. This was not a sleep, a mere dream, such as we sometimes experience. I call to witness that tribunal

¹⁰ *Id. ad Eustoch. De custodiend. Virginit. Opp. tom. iv. epist. xviii. p. 42.*

before which I was extended; I call to witness the dreadful sentence that froze me with terror. I never after exposed myself to a similar question, — one that led to my shoulders being bruised with blows, the pain of which I long felt; after this I studied the Holy Scriptures with as much zeal as I had formerly exercised in studying profane works.”¹¹ The holy doctor was faithful to his oath. Not only did he never after read any pagan author, but he even feared to quote the passages that naturally came into his memory. To those who said to him, as is often repeated at the present time, that without the pagan authors it would be impossible to speak or to write correctly, he replied, “What you admire I abominate, because I have tasted the folly of Jesus Christ; and the folly of Jesus Christ, know well, is wiser than all human wisdom.”¹²

¹¹ Nec vero sopor ille fuerat, aut vana somnia, quibus sæpe deludimur. Testis est tribunal illud, ante quod jacui; testis iudicium triste, quod timui: ita mihi nunquam contingat in talem incidere quæstionem, liventes habuisse scapulas, plagas sensisse post somnum, et tanto dehinc studio divina legisse, quanto non ante mortalia legeram. — *Ad Eustoch. De custod. Virginit.* epist. xviii. Opp. tom. iv. p. 43. Si quando cogimur litterarum sæcularium recordari, et aliqua ex his dicere; non nostræ sit voluntatis, sed, ut ita dicam, gravissimæ necessitatis. — *Prolegom. in Daniel; et ad Pammach.*

¹² *Prolegom. in Daniel.*

CHAPTER IX.
CONTINUATION.

LET us now hear St. Augustine. No doctor of the Church has combated more strongly or more perseveringly the deplorable use of the pagan classics than this admirable doctor, whose heart, as good as his genius was great, would at any cost preserve childhood from a danger in which he himself had been lost. He begins by explaining the motives that induced his parents to permit him to study the pagan authors; they are exactly the same as those put forward at the present time. "They told me," he writes, "that in them was to be found fine language; that from them was drawn that eloquence so necessary to persuade, and successfully to expose new ideas."¹ He then shows by an example, not only the frivolity, but also the danger of a similar motive. "What!" says he, "should we not have known these words, *gremium, imbrem aureum fucum*, if Terence had not spoken of a young debauchee proposing Jupiter himself as a model of infamy? No; it is not in learning this turpitude we learn these words, but by these words we learn to commit with more assurance this turpitude."²

Then, full of sorrow and indignation, he exclaimed: "Woe to the torrent of custom! Who will check thy ravages? When wilt thou be dried up? How long wilt thou toss these sons of Eve in this immense, this formidable sea, which the best-equipped can scarcely traverse? Is it not this beautiful science of fiction that shows us a thundering and adulterous Jupiter? It is a fiction! cry all the masters. Fiction as much as you will; but this fiction make crimes to cease to be crimes, and teaches man that in committing such infamies they rather imitate immortal gods than wicked men. And yet, O infernal flood! it is the hope of reward that leads the children of men to embark on thy waves to learn these things. I do not accuse words, which are as precious and innocent vases, but the wine of error and of vice that drunken masters there present to us; and if we do not drink, they chastise us, without our

¹ *Conf.* lib. V.

² *Id.* *id.*

being permitted to call upon a sober judge . . . And because I learnt these things with pleasure, they called me a child of great hope.”³

Virgil himself, the most chaste of all the Latin poets, made deep wounds in his soul. “I have learned in study,” says he, “many useful words, which I might have acquired by reading things less vain; but more, I have learnt the adventures of, I do not know what Æneas, and I forgot my own errors. I learned to weep for Dido, who killed herself for having loved too much; but for myself, who found death in reading these culpable follies, I had not a tear to shed. What deplorable stupidity! If they attempted to deprive me of this reading, I wept that I had nothing to weep for; and to such madness is given the name of the *belles lettres!*”⁴

And you, masters, professors, regents, who still make the study of what you call fine Latin the first consideration, who do not fear to propose Horace, Catullus, and Terence, authors still more dangerous than Virgil, as models to your pupils; who treat as barbarous all that does not bear the stamp of their language, listen to what St. Augustine says of your conduct: “They obliged me to consider it a matter of the first importance, and induced me by rewards and punishments to learn those words of Juno, wherein she expresses herself so full of pain and anger at not being able to prevent Æneas from approaching the Italian shore. They obliged us to write in prose what the poet had said in verse, and the one most applauded was he who depicted best the rage and anguish of this imaginary goddess. Behold, Lord my God, what importance men attach to syllables and letters, whilst they forget thy precepts! They are more ready to blame an error in pronunciation than an infringement of thy law. Is it astonishing that these things should have estranged me from thee; O my God! Since they never ceased to propose for my imitation men whom they did not fail to ridicule, if, in relating their actions, irreprehensible as they might be, they were unfortunate enough to commit a barbarism or a solecism, whilst they covered with praise those who related their infamies in correct and elegant language.”⁵

What were the fruits of this pagan education which so perfectly resembles ours? What might be expected, and what it will always be; the

³ *Conf.* lib. v.

⁴ *Talis dementia honestiores et uberiores litteræ putantur. — Id. id. c. 13.*

⁵ *Quid autem mirum quod in vanitates ita ferebar, et a te, Deus meus, ibam foras, quando mihi proponebantur homines, qui aliqua facta sua non mala, si cum barbarismo aut solæcismo enuntiarent, reprehensi confundebantur; si autem libidines suas integris et rite consequentibus verbis copiose ornateque narrarent, gloriosi laudabantur. — Conf. lib. v. c. 18.*

predominance of sensualism, and the weakening of spirituality; in other words, a precocious immorality, and a distaste for heavenly things. "When I was further advanced in age," says he of himself, "I proposed reading the Scriptures, that I might know what they were. But I was not able to penetrate the sense; my pride refused to submit to their lessons. The style, the ideas, all appeared unworthy to be compared to the majesty of Cicero. The pride of my mind could not bear such language; my eye did not penetrate their depth. The wisdom they contained was childish, and I refused to become a child, and, intoxicated with self, I imagined I was something great." ⁶

Let us not forget that the history of St. Augustine is more or less the history of all young people. Need we therefore be astonished to hear this great man raise his powerful voice to warn future ages: — "To instruct children from pagan books is not only to teach them useless things, it is to take them from God, and sacrifice them to the Demon. What are all these things but wind and smoke? Are there no other means by which to cultivate the mind, to give the tongue eloquence? Thy praises, Lord, so eloquently sung in the Scriptures, would have elevated, would have fixed, my feeble heart, and prevented its becoming a prey to unclean birds. Ah! there is more than one way of sacrificing man to demons. . . . Is it thus, then, that the child should be trained up? Are those the models that should be presented to him? In acting thus you offer neither birds, nor animals, nor human blood even, you offer what is much more abominable, you immolate the young on the altar of Satan." ⁷

Afterwards, all at once, seeing the sad condition of childhood thus cruelly ravished from God, he weeps, and exclaims: "Thou seest this, Lord, and art silent. O Thou, who art full of longanimity, of mercy, and of truth! But wilt Thou always be silent? Wilt Thou not draw out of the abyss souls that are made for Thee, and thirst after Thy love?" ⁸

Let us add, that one of the most bitter causes of regret of this great saint arose from his having taught rhetoric according to the pagan method, and having thus corrupted his pupils by turning them to materialism.

To avoid repetition, we will not return to the authors of the Middle Ages. We have seen that, during this epoch, the solemn proscription of the pagan classics was a general law, and this law was faithfully observed. We will only cite the letter of Gregory the Great to Didier,

⁶ *Conf. lib. iii. c. 5.*

⁷ *Id. et Epist. ad Nectarium.*

⁸ *Conf. lib. iii. c. 5.*

bishop of Vienne, in Dauphiné. This immortal pontiff had forbidden all the bishops to teach pagan literature to young people, yet Didier neglected this prohibition, which was considered very important, and when Gregory learnt this, he wrote to him in the following terms: —

“It has reached us, and we cannot call it to mind without blushing, that your fraternity teaches the pagan authors in some cases. Such a thing has caused us much pain, and has excited in our heart such a deep disgust that the pleasure we experienced in receiving news from you is changed into lamentation and sorrow; for the praises of Jupiter should never be in the same mouth with those of Jesus Christ. Consider the crime, the monstrosity, to find in bishops what *is not becoming even to a lay person*. Notwithstanding that our very dear son Candidus has come to us since this news has been announced, and having carefully interrogated him, he has denied the fact, and even sought to excuse you, we still continue to be unquiet. We are the more anxious to know of a certainty whether these things be true, seeing that they are the more horrible being found in a priest. If then it be proved to us that they are false, and that you do not lose your time about mere trifles, such as the profane literature, we will render thanks to God who has not permitted your heart to be tarnished by the blasphemous praises of men unworthy of the name.”⁹

In this letter, which is so strongly expressed, is it the teaching of the pagan authors to adults, as permitted by the Fathers of the Church, that is condemned? By no means, for St. Gregory himself approves of it elsewhere, and, as we have seen, it was practiced in the schools of the Middle Ages.¹⁰ What is here condemned is the teaching of pagan literature by a bishop, and that to children. “It is inexcusable,” adds the Pontiff, “even in lay persons sincerely religious, who understand both the holiness of the Christian, and the disastrous influence of pagan studies on inexperienced souls.”

To this long traditional chain we will add a last and a brilliant link. Towards the middle of the sixteenth century, at the moment when resuscitated paganism invaded Europe, one of those great men, such as the illustrious Society of Jesus has never been wanting in, the Rev. Father Possevin, trembling for the future, pronounced these earnest words: “An ancient has said, ‘Education is not a small thing, it is everything; it is man, it is society, it is religion.’” He said this in a work

⁹ Unde si post hæc evidenter ea quæ ad nos perlata sunt falsa esse claruerint, nec vos nugis et sæcularibus litteris studere constiterit, Deo nostro gratias agimus, qui cor vestrum maculari blasphemis nefandorum laudibus non permisit. — *Epist. lib. xi. epist. 54, Opp. tom. iii. p. 1171, edit. noviss.*

¹⁰ *Comment. in 1 Reg. c. iii. n. 30.*

in which he revealed to nations the secret of their greatness and of their ruin.¹¹ And, in fact, we find that the Jews, though they lived in Rome, though, by their dispersion, they were the living accomplishment of the prophecies of our Lord against Jerusalem and the synagogue; though they had daily before their eyes the triumphal arches of Titus and Vespasian, eternal monuments of their ruin; and though they were convinced by all kinds of proofs of the abolition of their law, did not become converted. And why? Because the venom of error was mixed with the milk of childhood. We see the same thing with the Turks, the Tartars, the Greek heretics and schismatics, who all remain obstinate in their belief or superstition. And why? Because education has, as it were, riveted in their heads the false opinions of their fathers.

“What is it in the present day that precipitates man into the gulf of sensualism, of injustice, of blasphemy, of impiety, of atheism? It is, doubtless, because from infancy all is taught except religion; it is because in the colleges, which are the nurseries of the state, they are made to study everything except the Christian authors. If they speak of religion it is mingled with paganism, that enemy of the soul. Of what use, we will ask, would it be to pour into a vast bin a glass of pure, delicious, well-refined wine, and at the same time a torrent of vinegar and spoiled wine? In other terms, what signifies a little catechism administered weekly with daily doses of pagan impurity and impiety? This, however, is what is done in our age from one end of Europe to the other.

“Will you save your republic? Apply the axe to the root; banish from your schools the pagan authors, who, under the false pretext of teaching your children good Latin, teach them the language of Hell. Scarcely do they leave the ranks of childhood than they commence their studies of law or medicine, or they enter the commercial world, and soon forget the little Latin they have acquired, but they do not forget the impurities they have learned by heart from the pagan authors. These things remain engraven on their memory, that during their whole lives they prefer to hear, to read, or to say, vain and dishonest things, rather than such as are useful and good: they reject the salutary teaching of the word of God, the sermons and religious exhortations that are addressed to them later.”¹²

The eloquent writer then asks what must be substituted for the pagan authors, and he answers that we must return to the ancient use of the

¹¹ Non parurn sed toturn est, qua quisque disciplina imbuatur a puero. — Arist. *Politic.*

¹² *Ragionamento del Modo di conservare lo Stato e la Libertà ai Lucchesi.*

Christian authors, that were used in the schools and colleges of the Middle Ages, a custom that was commanded by God Himself, by the Fathers, by the councils, and by a thousand other reasons:¹³ these consisted in *The Acts of the Martyrs*, the Lives of the Saints, the Scriptures, and the Fathers. After this, under the direction of enlightened and Christian masters, they might, not only without danger, but with profit, study the profane authors, and judge correctly of their doctrines by comparing them with the Christian authors with which they had been nourished.

To render this salutary counsel practical, and to oppose a barrier of some kind to the torrent of evil, a member of the same order as Father Possevin, the venerable Canisius, printed the letters of St. Jerome for the use of his classes. We must say that this collection, which was adopted in a great many gymnasiums and colleges in Germany and the rest of Europe, retarded the invasive movement of paganism.

We may say farther, that the Church herself raised her powerful voice against the use of pagan authors by children.¹⁴ To this mass of witnesses it will be easy to add many others. Those we have already cited enable us to ask, Is there in history any fact better established than that paganism has been formally forbidden in education? Whether there is neither presumption nor imprudence in neglecting the solemn warnings of wisdom, of genius, of experience, and of virtue? If, in the eyes of the Fathers of the Church and of the Pontiffs, classic paganism was but a simple form that had no unfavorable influence on youth, and, through the medium of youth, on literature, on the arts, on philosophy, on the sciences, on religion, on the family, on society, and, in a word, on the general march of human things?

¹³ Il modo che con la pratica di molte università e provincie Dio a mostrato per se stesso, pe' padri antichi, pe' concilj e per mille altri argomenti. — Id.

¹⁴ Antiqui vero libri ab Ethnicis conscripti, propter sermonis elegantiam et proprietatem perniittuntur: *Nulla tamen ratione pueris prælegendi erunt.* — Reg. Indic. jussu Conc. Trid. edit. reg. vii.

CHAPTER X.

TESTIMONY OF FACT. — INFLUENCE OF PAGAN CLASSICS ON LITERATURE.

FROM the evidence of men let us pass to that of facts, which, if possible, are still more decidedly in favor of our proposition. Paganism in education is destructive to literature, to the arts, to philosophy, to religion, to the family, and to society. The first proposition, namely, that it is destructive of literature, will be treated as a paradox; for it has become the custom to repeat that the study of pagan models led to the resuscitation of literature in Europe. We will examine the history of the *Renaissance*, a sketch of which has already been given.

From the fall of man, two opposing powers have disputed the empire of humanity, as also of the heart of each individual; — sensuality and spirituality; or, to speak according to the energetic language of Scripture, the flesh and the spirit, the old and the new man. For three thousand years the world was under the domination of the flesh; it had a language, a literature, and a poetry, the faithful expression of the principle into which it was transformed, for which alone it lived, which it pursued everywhere, which it loved in everything, and adored passionately under all forms. Becoming flesh, the world spoke the language of the flesh and of its three great lusts, — pride, cupidity, and voluptuousness. Completely sensual, its literature and its poetry, following the inspiration of the flesh and its three powers, assumed a form, hard, haughty, cold, hypocritical, but more frequently elegant and voluptuous, either to cover the hidden shame, or to give new attractions to the idol, at the feet of which all hearts secretly desired to see themselves enchained.

However, the day came when the domination of the flesh was destroyed, and man, delivered from this tyranny, lived happily under the empire of the spirit. Christianity brought about this blessed change, or, to speak more correctly, was itself this great revolution. Ruler of the

world for a thousand years, it had a language, a literature, and a poetry, which were the faithful expression of its sentiments. Now the Christian type of thought is the antipode to the pagan type. One is essentially spiritual, the other sensual. The Christian thought being divine, is the richest, the most simple, the most sublime, the most elevated, the most profound, the most chaste, and, in a word, the most beautiful in every point of view. The Christian literature participates abundantly of all the solid and brilliant qualities. Like the thought which produces it, it is, in turn, rich, spiritual, simple, sublime, true, sweet, chaste, serious, and modest in ornament; it was the constant preacher of spirituality, as paganism had been of sensuality. One trait particularly characterizes it: whilst the pagan literature is the slave of form, and decks itself in rich abundance to disguise its poverty, in the Christian literature the form is hidden as much as possible, in order that the matter may shine forth in all its majesty.

The world, then, has known two kinds of literature, the expressions of two types of thought. It is impossible to deny this fact. During the long period of fifteen hundred years, between the preaching of the Gospel and the rupture, Europe had acquired a manner of thinking in conformity with the causes that had acted on her. "If, in the progressive development of thought," writes a man free from suspicion, "she had been left to herself, free from all foreign influence, to modify her action, we should have seen a literature truly national, like that of the ancients, wherein would have been found all the traits of her civilization."¹ Instead of saying *we should have seen*, the author ought to have said, *we have seen*; for the fathers of the Church had clad Christianity, in its various manifestations, in its true form. Successor to so many men of genius, St. Gregory the Great had fixed it. Modeled in his school, St. Anselm, the Venerable Bede, Lanfranc of Canterbury, St. Bernard, St. Francis of Assisium, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventura, St. Antony of Padua, St. Bernardin of Sienna, St. Antony of Florence, and a crowd of others, had popularized, in Italy, in France, in England, and, in fact, throughout Europe, the perfect form of the Christian principle, in literature, in eloquence, in philosophy, in theology, in history.

To speak of literature in a more confined sense: Dante had chanted and Petrarch had written. France did not remain in arrear. "The poetry of her trouvères, her ancient fabulists, her romances of chivalry, composed, before the fifteenth century, a literature based on the popular traditions, on the national customs . . . If France had remained faithful to the first essays of her literary talent, correcting its

¹ *Essai sur la Littér. Rom.* p. 35.

imperfections without changing the principles, she would now be in the enjoyment of the advantages, too little appreciated, of a literature born and perfected in her bosom. Unfortunately, it has not been thus; the works of Greece and Rome were studied and commented on . . . Their principles were adopted, and their spirit prevailed. The works produced by an inspiration drawn from national sources were treated as barbarous and antiquated. In fine, a great revolution was brought about, in which France, perhaps more than any other country, took an active part.²

Let us examine how far literature has gained either in form or in matter. Not satisfied with having infected Germany, and with it half of Europe, the fugitive Greeks contaminated with their literary heresy the country of literature and arts — Italy, — and through her the other Latin nations. At their voice we see Christian and literary Europe abdicate, and take for her exclusive models the pagans of Athens and Rome, — imprison in the studied forms of their language, cold as the ashes of their tombs, her own, so forcible, so natural, so free, so vivid; to the supernatural inspiration of Christianity, prefer the false inspiration of pagan naturalism; in a word, become, as much as depended upon her, Greek and Roman in her composition, and pagan in her language. Little by little the rich fund of noble ideas, of generous sentiments, the exclusive produce of the faith, diminished, whilst form, with its luxury and affected elegance, became the great object of *literary art*. Henceforth nothing but modern thought, dressed out in pagan attire, was to be met with, — a spectacle not less ridiculous than would be a man of the present day decked in the Roman toga and Phrygian hat.

The resuscitation of the pagan form was soon found to be insufficient, and a Christian voice, that of the legislator of Parnassus, dared say to the world: “Turn your eyes towards Olympus, there are your gods, such alone as are worthy to embellish your works, whose mysteries and intervention are alone suited to works of genius. National history is but sterile and prosaic; the Gospel is too austere: its redoubtable mysteries destroy enthusiasm:” —

La fable offre à l'esprit mille agréments divers;
Là, tous les noms heureux semblent nés pour les vers.

* * * * *

De la foi d'un Chrétien les mystères terribles
D'ornements égayés ne sont pas susceptibles;
L'évangile à nos yeux n'offre de tous côtés

² *Essai sur la Littér. Rom.* p. 75.

TESTIMONY OF FACT

Que pénitence à faire et tourments mérités.

* * * * *

Oh! le plaisant projet dun poète ignorant
Qui de tant de héros va choisir Childebrand!³

Thus the thread that attached our poetry to that of our fathers is broken, and the same spirit no longer prevails, but is abandoned for a strange spirit, that we but ill understand, and that has no relation to our real life, with our religion, with our manners, or with our history. Olympus, with its idols, replaces the heaven of Christians . . . The *muse* of the moderns, submitted to this transfusion, has received blood into her veins that can never assimilate with her life . . . Poetry ceases to interest the people, who hear of nothing but Troy, and Thebes, and Rome, with their strange gods.

“Nature revolts against this artificial life that has been forced upon her. We are no longer of the same family; the unity of our existence is troubled; we are like the monster of Horace. And doubtless those who examine this carefully will find that hence comes that indifference for religion, and for the simplicity and sanctity of the Gospel; for, all that is truly great and noble has been succeeded by bombast and mannerism; not that these defects belonged in any way to the ancients, but because they belong to the false road we have taken in wishing to become other than that for which the wisdom of nature destined us in a modern and Christian world.”⁴ “The writers of a great people,” adds the judicious editor of Bouterweck, “ought to rival, and not to ape, the beauties they desire to adopt from others. If the creators of modern literature did not lose sight of this principle, they would have attached themselves more to the customs, the sentiments, to the institutions of our forefathers, and to our manners and religion, and we should not have a hybrid and colorless literature, composed of heterogeneous elements, false in principle, or formed in a type foreign to our ideas, — in a word, offering nothing but a *Greek literature in Western characters, a bad tracing of the literature of the ancients.*”⁵

By ceasing to be indigenous, that is, religious and national, our literature has not only lost its natural form, but its popularity also. “French poetry having become, under the influence of paganism, the

³ *Art. Poét.* c. iii.

⁴ Letter of M. C. de Villers to M. Millin, on ancient German poetry; *Mag. Pitt.* 1810, vol. v.

⁵ *Essai sur la Litter. Espagn.* p. 40.

most classic, is the only poetry that does not spread amongst the people.”⁶

“Instead of placing at the service of Christian genius,” adds a celebrated writer, “the progress of antiquity in the study of the beautiful, we have made Christian genius subservient to pagan literature and æsthetics. And what is the result? A neutral and servile literature, which has exercised a most unfortunate influence both on talents and morals, has degraded talent, in reducing it to the rank of copyist, and perverted morals, by becoming the interpreter and admirer of the puerile ideas and dissolute morals of antiquity, rather than the cultivator and embellisher of Christianity.”

“Again, what has been the result? That poetry, music, painting, and sculpture, arts that live but by the inspiration of religion and nationality, have lost their spirit, and eminent artists find themselves obliged to abandon what is called the *Renaissance*, and which will soon be known as the epoch of barbarity, and return to the traditions of the Middle Ages, there to recommence their studies, which our adoration for pagan art has thrown back three hundred years.

“Our attempts at pagan restoration in the order of politics have been still more disastrous: the Roman idea of creating soldiers, reigning over others by the right of the sword, bringing forth nothing but bloody wars. This idea is dead, with its last representative at St. Helena. The Greek idea, of making nations of legislators and functionaries, has led to a contempt of the laws and of power, and has rendered us ungovernable. The English idea of transforming men into automaton consumers and traders, occupied in filling their stomachs with the products of industry, or spreading them in all the markets of the world, revived national antipathies, and tends to develop in England, and the countries that imitate her, the frightful and hideous leper of pauperism.

“In fine, our modern directors of education have neglected nothing in order to make us retrograde two thousand years, and oblige Christian nations to readopt the miserable gait of a miserable antiquity.”⁷

⁶ Madame de Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, tom. i. p. 279.

⁷ M. Martinet, *De l'Education de l'Homme*.

CHAPTER XI.
CONTINUATION.

ALTERATION of form, and loss of its charms and popularity, are not the least injuries literature has sustained by the introduction of paganism: it has become vitiated in its very essence. From being spiritual, it has become sensual. Listen to history. It is true that in the fourteenth century Boccaccio unfurled the standard of paganism. Having fed his mind upon the ancient authors, particularly Homer and Menander, he had learned to live as a pagan, and the corruption drawn from such reading is found in abundance throughout his works. But such, at this epoch, was the general influence of Christian feeling, that Boccaccio, moved to repentance, publicly burnt his *Decameron* and other licentious works. The fatal seed he had sown was scarce known beyond the Alps, and only grew and produced fruit upon the arrival of the Greeks at Florence.

John Argyropoulos, Andrew Lascaris, and Isidore Gaza, chiefs of the emigration, received and loaded with honors by the Medicis, obtained permission to teach publicly. They took advantage of this, not only to explain, to comment, and to exalt pagan literature, but to impassion their listeners in its favor. Argyropoulos became tutor to the children of Cosmo de Medici, and made them fanatics in favor of Greek literature. Gaza translated into Greek the principal works of the ancient Latin authors, and the Greek authors into Latin. Lascaris, sent into Greece for the purpose, brought back several manuscripts of the orators, the poets, and the philosophers of his country, so that, thanks to the united efforts of these three personages, the love of pagan literature, passing all bounds, became a kind of worship. Trained in their school, Marcilius Ficinus restored pagan philosophy, and Politian pagan literature. Under the direction of Andronicus of Thessalonica, this latter, initiated in all the secrets of pagan letters, esteemed and taught nothing during the whole course of his life but pure paganism. Before he had arrived at the age of fifteen, he related in a Latin poem the games, which, at the instigation of the pagans, the Medicis caused to be celebrated at Florence; he translated into Latin the Greek historians; he celebrated in

lyric verse the praises of Horace, whom he made almost a god; he composed epigrams that were perfectly pagan; he wrote in Italian verse lewd songs and tragedies entirely in the pagan taste, and these were elegantly printed at Florence.

Not satisfied with corrupting his contemporaries, Politian transmitted to posterity his poisonous teaching. He founded a school to which all the distinguished youths of Tuscany and Italy pressed. Amongst others, Machiavelli was educated at this school; he it was who, full of love and admiration for the pagans, composed, in reminiscence of Lucian and Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, an obscene poem, the prelude to comedies more obscene than those of Plautus and Terence. The most distinguished for its obscenity is that which has for its title *La Mandragora*, a most infamous piece, which has greatly contributed to corrupt morals. From the study of the poets Machiavelli passed to that of the pagan historians, particularly Titus Livius. Preferring their political principles and social doctrines to those contained in the Gospels, he composed his famous book of *The Prince*, which is justly called the code of hypocrisy, of fraud, and impiety, because it is calculated to shake the foundations of good faith, of virtue, of justice, and of religion amongst men.

Politian also formed Peter Bembo and John Della Casa, both of them distinguished Latin scholars and Hellenists, but both faithful imitators of their models, and consequently perfectly corrupt in their morals, and not less so in their works. Both these authors repented, but it is not the less true that it was sufficient for them to have drunk at the fountain of paganism to have become the shame of their country and the scourge of public morals.¹ Such are some of the fruits of paganism upon its re-appearance at the end of the fifteenth century.

Whilst it invaded Florence, paganism gradually extended itself over the rest of Europe. Rome itself felt its disastrous influence. There, under the inspiration of Pomponius Leta, too many allowed themselves to be taken by the fever by which he himself was devoured. Such was the enthusiasm of this man, that he would read none but profane works; he devoutly celebrated the feast of the foundation of Rome, and even went so far as to erect altars to Romulus. The consequence of this passionate love of paganism was, what it always must be, contempt of the Christian religion. Pomponius said it was only fit for barbarians; the Scriptures and the works of the Fathers received but sarcasm from him, and in fine, his private life was worthy of his models. His impiety and atheism went so far, that it caused him to be put in prison; happily, he left it, to

¹ See their lives in *Tiraboschi*, or the *Dictionnaire Biographique*.

die a Christian death in a hospital.

The fire, however, that he had lighted spread amongst youth. From midnight they besieged the door of his school to assist at the lessons that began at sunrise. As Pomponius had given worship to Romulus, men animated with the same spirit established feasts in honor of Plato, and erected sanctuaries in memory of Catullus. There were no less than a hundred and eighty poets at one time, who made Christian Rome re-echo with their pagan lute! Checked for a time by the efforts of Innocent VIII, Alexander VI, and Adrian VI, the pagan movement again took up its course with increased rapidity. It had already reached France, where Muret became the fanatical disciple of Anacreon, of Horace, of Catullus, and of Terence; he realized in his morals the teaching of the authors of his predilection: Paris and Toulouse, Italy, and even Venice, witnessed his scandal, and at length he took up his abode at Rome. There he repented of the immense evil he had done; but far from diminishing, his love for pagan literature only increased. The proof of this is to be found in his *Juvenilia Carmina*, in his notes on Horace, Catullus, Tacitus, Cicero, Sallust, Aristotle, and Xenophon: the work of his whole life.

Having become mistress through the medium of education, the pagan reaction naturally extended itself to the customs of the people. Ancient Rome had her poets before she boasted her theaters; but the first brought forth the second. It was the same at the time of the *Renaissance*. The theaters, which all the Fathers of the Church, all the councils, all the sovereign pontiffs, had with a unanimous voice banished from the Christian cities, re-appeared first at Florence, and afterwards throughout the rest of Europe. Permanent theaters were to be found everywhere, and, what had not been seen for fifteen centuries, Christian nations came in crowds to occupy these theaters, circles, and hippodromes, and applauded with pagan ardor spectacles entirely pagan. What was then commenced is still continued, and the advantage to public morals is well known. Thus, at first, the Greek comedies of Aristophanes and Menander, as well as the Latin ones of Terence, were performed on the Italian stage in all their native crudity. Afterwards, in order that the people, and the women little versed in Latin, might take part in the representation, Machiavelli, Ariosto, and more recently Metastasio, Casti, and a crowd of other pagan disciples, composed pieces in the vulgar tongue, that breathed the sensuality and obscenity of their models.

Soon the academies, the palaces of the nobles, and the houses of private individuals resounded with the verses of the pagan poets. There was no longer any taste for other than the books of antiquity; they alone were objects of ardent study. In the study of the learned, on the table of

the scholar, the chair of the professor, and the drawing-room of the lady, Virgil had taken the place of the Scriptures; Cicero replaced St. Paul and St. Augustine; Horace, Plato, Aristophanes, and Catullus, *The Acts of the Martyrs*, and the Lives of the Saints.

A similar movement manifested itself in the rest of Europe, but more particularly in France. Our greatest poets, Corneille and Racine, represented to the admiring world the principal pieces of the pagan theater, or subjects taken from paganism: — the Horatii and Curiatii, Cæsar, Britannicus, Iphigenia, I know not what. The whole pagan world, terrestrial and Olympic, came to lay before the Christian people sentiments, ideas, and affections entirely stranger to their nature and morals, and completely opposed to the teaching of their religion. What can be more sensual than certain pieces which it is unnecessary to name, and which have caused their authors to shed tears of repentance? What can be more forced, more furious, more anti-social, and anti-Christian than these sentiments expressed in other pieces not less applauded: —

Mais vouloir au public immoler ce qu'on aime,
S'attacher au combat contre un autre soi-même . . .
Une telle vertu n'appartenait qu'à nous . . .

* * * * *

Rome a choisi mon bras, je n'examine rien,
Avec une allégresse aussi pleine et sincère
Que j'épousai la sœur, je combattrai le frère.

What man, and with greater reason, may we say, what Christian, would not reply with the Curiatii:

Je rends grâces aux dieux de n'être pas Romain,
Pour conserver encore quelque chose d'humain!

During the eighteenth century, the theater continued to draw upon paganism. When the mine was exhausted, or talent was wanting, they composed tragedies, comedies, vaudevilles, dramas, and melodramas, which partook only of the principle of paganism; that is, sensuality. Soon the form itself was neglected, in order to display more clearly the frightful nudity of passion. Step by step, the theater, literature, and poetry arrived at the disgusting productions of Parny, Pigault-Lebrun, Victor Hugo, Scribe, Soulié, Eugène Sue, and the *feuilletonistes*, where we are at present. The natural result of this union of all the intellectual

forces to resuscitate literary paganism in Europe, and present it to the eyes of youth and of society under the most attractive forms, was that the Fathers of the Church, who so gloriously occupied the Middle Ages, remained buried in the dusty cartularies of the libraries. It is with difficulty that we find some few discourses, some treatises of great men, translated at this epoch, though their works in the vulgar tongue would have assisted so powerfully to awaken the faith and protect the morals of the people. Whilst on the other hand Cicero had Manutius for translator; Titus Livius, Mardi; Virgil, Caro; Ovid, Anguillare; and so with the rest of the pagan authors.

In the most Catholic states, we find the printing press itself, newly invented, only gave a few letters of St. Jerome, and some other Christian works which seem to have been produced with regret, whilst the presses of Amsterdam, of Geneva, and of Basle, directed by Erasmus and by Protestants, were left to publish, or rather to corrupt,² the great monuments of Christian antiquity, the works of the holy Fathers. Thus the first Greek book printed in Italy was the Greek Grammar of Constantine Lascaris; and the Pindar in quarto, edited at the expense of the famous banker Chigi, was the first work produced at Rome. Aldus Manutius, the prince of Italian typographers, put aside almost all Christian works to dedicate his talents and his life to the reproduction of the pagan authors, particularly Virgil, Lucian, Horace, Juvenal, Lucan, Cicero, Demosthenes, Homer, and Sophocles. It might be said that typography had been given to man to propagate the reign of paganism; or rather, from the first, printing began the work we see accomplished in our days.

The pagan invasion continued its march. The models of antiquity were no longer offered for admiration as types of the beautiful, and as a rule for good taste only; they were looked upon as moral guides, as if the Gospel had disappeared. We do not here allude to the classic teaching in which they were used to form the heart and the mind of youth, we come to a more direct proof. Erasmus furnishes it. This literary prince of his time, who gave the tone to the whole of Europe, — Erasmus says, with a seriousness in which folly and impiety dispute: — “Have I made any progress in growing old? I know not. What I know is, that Cicero never pleased me so much as he does in my old age. Not only his *divine* eloquence, but his *sanctity* inspires my soul, and makes me better than I am. It is for this that I do not hesitate to exhort youth to devote its choicest years, I do not say to reading and re-reading his works, but to learning them by heart. For myself, already in the decline

² They consisted principally of prefaces, dissertations, and of notes.

of life, *I am happy and proud to be restored to the favor of my Cicero, and to renew with him an early friendship too long interrupted.*"³

This single declaration is sufficient to show to what extent the pagan fanaticism had possessed society. Certain it is that in other times a *Christian, a priest, a religious* (and Erasmus was all these), would have blushed at the idea of becoming better, not through the Gospels, but through Cicero; and at the hour of death to be restored to favor, not with God, but with Cicero; he would have been shocked at the thought of writing such follies to priests, and to Roman prelates of high dignity, had not these absurdities found partisans in all countries as well as in all conditions.

In order that the youths, following the precept of Erasmus, might become more virtuous in reading, not the Scriptures, or the works of the Fathers, but the masters of paganism, what are called the *moral* classics were composed. As a masterpiece of this kind, we will mention the *Selectæ e profanis*, where the pagans are represented as perfect models of the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, strength, and temperance. Now these heroes of virtue did not confess, communicate, assist at Mass, in fine, were not Christians; therefore, that Christianity, with its embarrassing obligations, is not necessary in order to be virtuous, must inevitably be the conclusion drawn from such teaching. The proof of this was never more striking than at the present time. What is the dominant philosophy of the epoch? Is it not eclecticism, rationalism? Does not this philosophy pretend that religion is but a pedestal, a go-cart, a platform that ought to fall? Are we not now taught that the world has produced a crowd of men celebrated for their virtue, and that philosophy alone has formed them? Pythagoras, Antisthenes, Socrates, Plato, the Stoics, Cato, Condorcet, Destutt de Tracy, Cabanis, etc.? And does not every one, from the palace to the cottage, unite in saying: "One may be virtuous without religion?"⁴ We may be allowed to say in passing, that Fenelon leads to the same result in giving to Telemachus all the virtues that Christianity alone can inspire.⁵ The

³ An ætatis progressu profecerim, nescio. Certe nunquam mihi magis placuit Cicero quam nunc placet *seni*; qui non tantum ob divinam quamdam orationis vim, verum etiam ob pectoris eruditi *sanctimoniam* profecto meum *afflavit* animum meque mihi reddidit meliorem. Itaque non dubitem hortari juventutem ut *in his libris* evolvendis atque etiam addiscendis bonas horas collocent. Me vero etiamsi *pene vergente ætate, nec pudebit, nec pigebit cum meo Cicerone* redire in gratiam pristinamque familiaritatem nimium multis annis intermissam renovare. — Procœm. in xxii. Tuscul.

⁴ Course of M. Saisset, 1850.

⁵ And the Chevalier de Ramsay praises him with enthusiasm. — *Œuvres de Fenel.* tom. viii. p. 17.

same principles are to be found in numerous other works, those of Berquin in particular, where children are taught to be virtuous without being religious; where the natural sentiments and human reason take the place of sacraments, precepts of promises, and menaces of faith.

If any other proof of the disastrous invasion of paganism were necessary, we might add that the worship of pagan literature was pushed so far that religious things ceased to be called by Christian names, and the sanctity of Christianity was soiled by ridiculous fables of mythology. Bembo, in his letters, says of Leo X that he became Sovereign Pontiff by the *decrees of the immortal gods*: — *Se deorum immortalium decretis factum esse pontificem*. He also calls our Lord a *hero*, — *heroem*, and the Blessed Virgin, the *goddess of Loretto*, — *deam Lauretanam*; the faith, *persuasion*, — *persuasionem*; excommunication, the interdiction of fire and water, — *interdictionem aquæ et ignis*. For him, and those like him, not a word was Latin if it were not to be found in Cicero. This is the testimony of John Lami, a partisan of the same opinion.⁶

Others call the august Mary, the hope of gods, *Spes deorum*; Heaven, Olympus, *Olympum*; Hell, Erebus, *Erebum*; the souls of the just, *manes pios*; priests, flamens, *flamines*; the bishops, archiflamens, *archiflamines*; the grand religious solemnities, *lectisternia*; the sacred college, the senate of the Latium, *Latii senatus*; the tiara, *Romula infula*. Instead of saying with all Christians, if it please God, they say, if it please the gods, — *si diis placet*. The ecclesiastical hierarchy is, according to them, the work of the gods, — *vario quos ordine divum mancipat*; the Mass, the sacred worship of the gods, — *sacra deum*; holy water, lustral water, — *lustralibus undis*; and the statues of saints, the images of the gods, — *simulacra sancta deorum*. Nothing would be easier than to find in works purely literary a number of other names not less dangerous than ridiculous.

What is still more grave is that sacred eloquence, disdaining the Scriptures and the Fathers, which are a fruitful source of chaste ornament, took all its colors, its examples, its proofs, from pagan history, sometimes even from mythology. Ascetic works submitted to the same influence: almost every page offers some example, in word or action, taken from the great men in paganism, as models of virtues, or as guarantees of truth.

Subjects, even though they were Christian, were henceforth treated in the style and meter of paganism, and embellished with pagan

⁶ Puritas Latinitatis nihil aliud est quam incorrupta, secundum Romanam (ethnicam) consuetudinem dicendi et scribendi ratio.

ornaments: we will cite some few examples out of thousands. Sannazara and Vida are the two most distinguished authors who undertook to chant the mysteries of religion at this epoch. The first, in his poem entitled *De Partu Virginis*, makes a medley, which we would call ridiculous, were it not indecent, of the most august truths of the faith and the absurdities of fable. The whole poem is filled with gods and goddesses; whilst the name of our Lord does not occur once.

In relating how our Lord and the Blessed Virgin overcame idolatry, Sannazara commences by invoking the muses: — *O musæ . . . quandoquidem genus è cælo deducitis*. But this is not enough, he implores the Blessed Virgin, whom he calls the firm hope of men and of gods, — *spes fida hominum, spes fida deorum, alma parens*; he also makes her a goddess and a queen of gods: — *diva more, reginamque deum de more salutat*. The Eternal Father announces his intention to replace man in the sojourn of the gods, — *divum potius revocentur ad oras*. The angel Gabriel finds the Holy Virgin reading, according to her custom, not Isaiah, nor the Psalms; but the Sibyls, — *atque illi veteres de more Sibyllæ in manibus*; he salutes her in the name of a goddess, and tells her to fear nothing, — *exue, dia, metus animo*. The news of the Incarnation reaching the place of departed souls, those of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, rejoiced, — and why? Because they were about to quit the shades of Acheron, and would no longer be annoyed by the barking of Cerberus, — *quo tristia linquant Tartara, et evectis fugiant Acheronta tenebris, immanemque ululatum Tergimini canis!*

What follows passes all that one could imagine. The poet personifies the Jordan, and announces the mystery of the Incarnation to him by Proteus! — *Cæruleus Proteus . . . hoc effudit carmine voces: adveniet tibi, Jordanes, properantibus annis, adveniet, mi crede, inquit*. Vida, not less distinguished for his verse, thinks and speaks but of Virgil, who he knew by heart. A learned and irreproachable bishop, he was in a most favorable position for resisting the impulse of the age; on this account he merits especial consideration: the influence of paganism on him will give us the *minimum* compared with the effect on less robust minds; and the learned, the grave, the worthy Bishop of Cremona, is an undeniable proof that the *Renaissance*, repudiating the literary heritage of the ages of faith, did not admit any subject, serious or trifling, religious or profane, to be treated in any other language than that of paganism, which calls for the constant intervention of its men and its gods.

His *Poetics*, written in Virgilian centos, speaks of little else but Phœbus, the Muses, of Parnassus, and of Minerva. More frequently, perhaps, than in any pagan author, we find in it the names of gods and

pagan things. In his fanaticism, Vida even goes so far as to make Virgil a kind of God in *eloquence* and *sanctity*: — *Verbo Deo similis; nil mortale sonas. Salve, sanctissime vates*; a god he honors; a god to whom he promises, *for ever, crowns, incense, altars, and worship*; a god, in fine, such as a poet ought to *invoke*. *Te colimus: tibiserta damus, tibi thura, tibi aras, et tibi vite sacrum semper dicemus honorem. Nos aspice, præsens, pectoribusque tuos castis infunde calores, adveniens pater atque animis tete insere nostris.*⁷

The same prelate composed a serious poem on the game of chess. The players in this game are not simple mortals, — kings, emperors, or historical personages of the East or West; the parties engaged are Apollo and Mercury, and they play at the wedding of the Ocean with the Earth. Jupiter is the judge of the combat; the spectators are Venus, Mars, and Vulcan. The struggle is carried on in the midst of the trickery of the immortals, and finished to the advantage of the black soldiers, who triumph under the inspiration of Mercury!

After having exercised himself in literary subjects, Vida enters upon Christian ones. His most important work is the *Christiados*. It is but a tracing of the *Æneid* with interminable discourses. The subject is the history of Our Lord, which St. Joseph and St. John relate to Pilate at the moment of the passion. We will pass over the anachronism and the want of probability, and come to the pagan form given to a subject that lends itself but little to it.

God the Father is spoken of in all the names given to Jupiter: he is the god of mortals, the powerful master of the tempest, of thunder and of rain, the monarch of Olympus: *Saperum sator, superum pater nimbipotens, altisonans, imbripotens, regnator Olympi*. Our Lord is constantly spoken of as a hero: the hero reproaches Peter with wishing to prevent him from dying, — *increpuit dictis quem talibus heros*; the hero marches, surrounded by his companions, — *multis comitantibus heros . . . instat*; the hero, motionless at the tomb of Lazarus, prays to his father, — *immobilis heros orabat*; the hero enters the temple, and sees those who profane it, — *heros ingressus vidit*; the hero arrives at the Garden of Olives, and is borne down by terrible thoughts, — *curis confectus tristibus heros*; the hero is undismayed at the sight of the Jews who come to take him, — *his nil trepidus compellans vocibus heros*; the hero converts St. Peter, — *tum monitus verborum, keros quæ extrema canebat, ingemuit*; the hero dies insulted by the bad thief, — *ipse etiam verbis morientem heroa superbis stringebat*.

It was not only from his episcopal pen that Vida let fall the name of

⁷ Lib. iii.

hero to designate the Son of man; he put this profane name into the mouth of St. John. Relating to Pilate the actions of the divine Master, the well-beloved disciple said: The hero, passing through a field, dried up a sterile fig-tree, — *heros qui hac forte tenebat*; the hero, raising his hands to Heaven, delivered one possessed, — *heros palmas in cælum sustulit ambas*; the hero retiring into a desert, — *se clam subduxerat heros cœtibus*; the hero, attacked by the Demon, reveals His divinity and eludes all the artifices of the Enemy: like the courser, freed from his reins, dashes into the plain and sports with his pursuers; — *si protinus heros ipse Deum claro confessus numine eorum irrita furta dolosque exhibat semper apertos. Qualis ubi excussis per plana evasit habenis, liber equus ludit famulos hinc inde sequentes*. It is St. John the Evangelist who is made to say these things!

We have many citations: St. John is transported into the sojourn of the gods; — *penetralia divum mente subit*. Returning to Earth he relates to Pilate the miracle of the loaves; he says that the people by whom his master was followed in the desert had been deprived of the bounties of Ceres for three days: *Eos tertia namque muneris expertes Cereris lax acta videbat*. In fine, he accuses the Eumenides with having stirred up the hatred of the Jews against Him: — *Eumenides . . . circumeunt . . . agitantque furentes*. Up to the sixteenth century it was never imagined that St. John had studied mythology; but what will not a barbarous age surmise?

The well-beloved disciple of our Lord has not, however, said all. The poet goes on to designate by their names and attributes all the spirits of darkness that pushed the Jews to deicide. The first is the king of Erebus, then the Gorgons, then the Sphinxes, followed by centaurs, hydras, and chimeras; in the rear march the Scyllas and Harpies: — *Arbiter ipse Erebi . . . Gorgonas hi, Sphingasque obscæno corpore reddunt; centaurosque hydrasque illi, ignivorasque chimæras; centum alii Scyllas, ac fœdificas Harpyas*. He further goes on to say that the faults of the Magdalen must be attributed to Venus: — *Sensibus illapsa est Veneris malesuada Cupido, quæ mentem immutans furiis subjecit iniquis*. One of the furies had seven heads; it is the same that our Savior cast out, and is designated by its mythological name: — *Hæc Deus, hæc, iniquit capitum fœdissima septem, correptam miseræ mentem vexabat Erinnys*.

What follows is still more serious. Faith teaches us that God confided the Blessed Virgin to the care of St. Joseph in giving her to him for wife. Vida tells us it is the will of the immortals; — *Ei olim alma Parens fuerat superum concredita jussis*. The Blessed Virgin herself is called a nymph, — *regia progenies, nymphæ dignate superbo conjugia*; the

most beautiful of nymphs, — *nympharum pulcherrima*. She is something more, a goddess, — *sub pedibusque deæ lumen dare candida luna*. It is, in the name of the gods that St. Joachim commands his daughter to marry, — *jussa docens superum*. Saint Ann, like a Bacchanalian, become a prey to a sacred delirium, in her ravings designates the husband: — *In media Anna parens, subito correpta furore, plena Deo tota, visu venerabile, in æde bacchatur, tollitque ingentem cæli ululatum*.

The poetry of the Renaissance, contemning the simplicity of the Gospel, is careful not to say that our Savior changed the water into wine at the wedding feast; the miracles must be enameled with pagan beauties, and the water become the juice of Bacchus: — *Fontis aquam latices Bacchi convertit in atros*. Again, it is the cup of Bacchus they present to our Lord on the Cross: — *Corrupti pocula Bacchi inficiunt felle*. The unleavened bread, the bread of the Eucharist, is called Ceres without mixture, — *sinceram Cererem*.

In fine, either from the allurements of poetry, or the impossibility of defining the mysteries of religion in pagan Latin, or from his fanatic desire to recall the Virgilian form, Vida allowed himself to relate, in the following terms, the institution of the Holy Eucharist. “The hero took the unleavened bread hastily prepared, broke it and divided it amongst his companions; afterwards he filled a cup of wine and limpid water, blessed the divine mixture it contained, and presented the foaming cup to them, saying, ‘This is the true image of our body, the true image of our blood, which I, a victim, devoted to my Father, offer up for all men!’ ”

Jamque heros puras fruges properataque liba
Accipiens, frangensque manu, partitur in omnes;
Inde mero implevit pateram lymphaque recenti,
Et laticis mixti dium sacravit honorem,
Spumantemque dedit sociis: mox talia fatur:
Corporis hæc nostri, hæc vera cruoris imago,
Unus pro cunctis quem fundam sacra parenti
Hostia . . . ” — Lib. ii. v. 651.

We will not accuse Vida of heresy; we will presume his verses have an orthodox sense; but we avow we cannot see how the words, *vera imago corporis*, signify “this is my body.” Saint Thomas speaks very differently. It would not be difficult to find in the pagan expressions of Vida many other theological inexactitudes; so true is it, as we shall see later, that it is impossible to explain the Christian truths in pagan Latin,

which is only calculated to open the way to heresy.

Let us add, that, according to the fashion of the epoch, after having trampled under foot the literature of the ages of faith, the bishop repented in the end.⁸ Tormented with remorse for having employed a portion of his life in profane works, he disavowed all the errors that might have escaped him, and asked pardon for having consecrated to profane letters time that he owed to God.⁹

Such are Sannazara and Vida, the two princes of the poetry of the *Renaissance*; both of them, Christian in subject, are completely pagan in reasoning, in means, in maxims, meter, style, and execution; and both have expended great talents and imagination to compose elegant trifles. Fortunately, the evil is not great; for their works are so bare of interest that it is impossible to read them to the end.

The example set by the literature of these men is, however, very serious. A crowd of pretended poets took up the pen, as well in France as in Italy, to remodel the hymns of the Church. In the eyes of these Vandals of a new kind, the sacred hymns, which, with but few exceptions, are masterpieces of Christian poetry, worthy of the taste and admiration of all men, were only fit to throw aside as barbarous. For these sacred chants, written in the style of St. Ambrose, of St. Gregory, of Innocent III, of St. Bonaventura, and of St. Thomas, were substituted new pieces labored in the style and meter of Horace. Here again we find that Vida, the precursor of Santeuil and of Coffin, pushed by a zeal more grammatical than episcopal, composed for the feasts of our Lord and those of the saints, that are celebrated in the course of the year, hymns that are veritable odes of Horace, less the poetic inspiration. Besides the choice of words and measure, there is nothing really great, holy, or pious; and in reading them the heart grows cold rather than becomes warmed by the celestial things of which they treat.

In fine, what is very deplorable is that we find secular persons who had hitherto employed their talents in writing in favor of religion, — ecclesiastics, religious, and even bishops, forgetting the dignity of their character and the duties of their charge, to consecrate their talents and their watchings to explain and comment upon the pagan authors; expending the treasures of erudition to give value to each word, as if it were a question of Scripture; we find them exerting all their energies to justify a variation in an epigram of Martial, in a comedy of Terence, or

⁸ *Medycum clarissima familia, cujus liberalitati et industriæ hæc ætas literas ac bonas artes, quæ plane extinctæ erant, excitatas atque reviviscentes debet, etc. — Notand. in fin. Christiad.*

⁹ *Opp. vers. fin.*

of Aristophanes; to celebrate the riches of a period of Cicero, or make stand out in relief the *Quadrupedante putrem* and the *procumbit humi bos* of Virgil. What is still more deplorable is that they set the example, unfortunately too well followed since, of translating, in their integrity, the most licentious works of paganism. They employed more time in celebrating Jupiter, Venus, Mars, Minerva, Apollo, Diana, and Cupid, than in defending religion and society, the morals and belief of Christianity, at that time so violently attacked.

But perhaps the greatest evil was the discredit they threw upon the Christian literature and language, which was called and looked upon as barbarous. There was not one of them who did not proclaim, as an axiom, that genius, eloquence, poetry, history, and philosophy, dwelt nowhere but in the Forum and in Piræus; not one who does not say with Scaliger that he would sooner have composed the Ode of Horace, *Quem tu, Melpomene, semel*, than be king of France. Some of them carried their contempt for the language, the poetry, the eloquence of Christianity, so far as to pass all belief. Amongst others, we will cite the learned and excellent Father Maffei, who, as a brother of his order informs us, seriously asked of his Holiness the Sovereign Pontiff permission to recite his breviary in Greek, for fear he should corrupt his Latin in reading the Vulgate and Roman breviary.¹⁰ If a man of eminent piety, if an exemplary religious, allowed himself to go so far, what must we expect from others who have neither knowledge nor piety?

From this rapid sketch, it results clearly that, under the influence of classic paganism, modern literature has lost its true, its national and Christian character; that instead of being original and independent, it has become a servile copyist; instead of being the production of the soil, it has become a factitious production, without savor, without force, like a tender exotic; instead of being the organ of spirituality, it has been, too often, the degraded apostle of sensuality. Will modern literature cease this unworthy part? will she lay down this antique toga? will she quit this world of shades and fables, to enter that of faith and reality? Who can say? This we know — that all has fallen around her throne, and this throne cannot stand alone, amongst so many ruins. The world must

¹⁰ To be impartial, we ought to say that the Abbé Serassi, author of a life of Father Maffei, denies this fact, which is, nevertheless, very probable: — “L’ autore,” says Tiraboschi, “descrive ancora le religiose virtù di cui fù adorno, e la somma attenzione con cui egli esaminava scrupolosamente ogni parola ed ogni sillaba; benchè egli creda una favola cio che alcuni raccontano, cio è ch’ egli per isfuggire il pericolo dimbeversi del poco elegante stile del Breviario Romano, avesse dal pontifice (Greg. XIII) ottenuto le facoltà di recitarlo in Greco.” — *Stor. della Letterat. Ital.* tom. vii. lib. iii. pars 3, p. 1014.

PAGANISM IN EDUCATION

perish, or this throne must fall in its turn, and from its ruin a new literature spring up, which shall be the true expression of society restored to itself, — that is, become Catholic.

CHAPTER XII.

INFLUENCE OF THE PAGAN CLASSICS ON THE LANGUAGE.

IF it is incontestable that the introduction of paganism into the education of youth has deeply affected the thought, and, in some measure, the *being* of modern nations, it is equally incontestable that the form of thought, that is, word and art, must show equally distinct traces of this influence. To what we have said on poetry and literature, we will add a few words on the ordinary language, which is more directly influenced by literature in the learned languages. We will speak of Art.

Every one knows that style is the man; that the language of a people is but the exterior form of his thought, his taste, his manner of judging, and of feeling. If a people is Christian, its language will be Christian; if a people be profoundly Christian, its language will be the same. On the contrary, if a people be pagan, its language will be also pagan; if it is thoroughly pagan, its language will bespeak it. This is an infallible thermometer by which to appreciate the nature of the idea which dominates a people or an individual.

As we have seen, for three centuries, paganism, that is, naturalism and sensualism, arriving directly by the high road of education to the root of society, has deeply affected the various peoples of Europe. The proposition we are about to prove is that the languages of these peoples bear the stamp of paganism deeply imprinted on them. In the Middle Ages the languages of the nations of Europe were faithfully *modeled* on the language of religion, of which they retained the perfume. Spiritualism and supernaturalism are found everywhere, Christian words and the sacred names are found upon every lip: the Christian sap animated the word and vivified the thought. The first, in turn, grave, simple, noble, vigorous, rich, natural, affecting, and varied, communicates all the qualities of the second. Nothing is easier to prove than this; it is only necessary to open the capitularies of our kings and the charters of ancient times, to consult our historians, such as

Joinville, Froissard, or Avila; to examine the discourse of the chancellors of our universities, the addresses of our presidents, and other public or official documents.

Pagan classics arrive, and immediately the language changes its character. It began by losing its richness and simplicity. Fenelon himself could not help remarking upon this: "Our language," says he, "is wanting in many words and phrases; it appears to me that, in endeavoring to purify it, they have *crippled and impoverished it* during the last *hundred years*. It is true it was somewhat rugged and verbose, but we regret our old language when we come upon it in Marot, Amyot, and Cardinal d'Ossat; there is something in it so *trite, natural, bold, vivid, and impassioned*."¹ The Christian sap diminished, the supernatural becomes more rare, the ancient forms which express it so admirably disappear altogether, or are palpably altered. If there are any vestiges left, it is in the language of the people we must seek it; for the language of letters has been deprived of it, the Christian words have become antiquated, they are pronounced but rarely and with regret.

Thus, the adorable name of our Lord Jesus Christ is not to be found once in any legal document of the country for more than sixty years, and whilst the man of the world glories in citing Horace and Virgil, we never find him quoting a maxim of the Old or New Testament. The names of the pagan philosophers fall naturally from his tongue, but he never, or rarely, utters those of the apostles or prophets. If he would eulogize a virtue, he does not call it a Christian virtue, but a *virtue of antiquity*; if he would present the type of a great character, he does not select a Christian, but a pagan. Everywhere he can he substitutes profane or pagan words, words purely *natural*, for Christian words of a *supernatural* signification. For God, he says *Divinity, Supreme Being, Nature*; for religion, *Cult*; for faith, *religious convictions*; for charity, *philanthropy, humanity*; for alms, *assistance*. On the borders of the tomb, the Catholic *Requiescat in pace* gives place to the pagan, *May the Earth be light to thee*.

It would be easy to cite a crowd of other substitutions in proof of the alteration of the Christian thought. We will not speak of particular religious expressions which are never found on the lips of certain men, or in certain works, unless accompanied by expressions of contempt and blasphemy. This is so true, that one may converse for a long time with a man of letters, no matter on what subject, without discovering from his language whether he be a Jew, a Protestant, or a follower of Buddha. It is the same with most modern publications; the Catholic seal

¹ *Lettre sur l'Eloquence.*

is so far effaced, that one may ask whether the author has a religion, and whether the work come from Paris, Geneva, or Constantinople.

This is shameful, ridiculous, and scandalous, but it is the legitimate fruit of pagan classics. It is ridiculous, from the inconsistency that exists between a baptized soul and pagan expressions; it is shameful, as being a clear sign of the weakening or total loss of the faith; it is scandalous, inasmuch as nations cannot, either by our language or our public morals, distinguish what we are in point of religion, or know what rank to assign to us amongst the peoples. This scandal has become, in the republican calendar, the official language of the nation, which, nourished on paganism, that is to say, on sensualism and naturalism, finds it perfectly logical to conform to its models in language, as well as in institutions and morals. A ready justice, it is true, was rendered to this premature essay. Yet if we would know to what depth paganism has penetrated the public mind, with what force it is anchored in our ideas, a simple comparison will suffice. Besides the moral interest this contrast presents, it is curious as never having been made before.

We find this contrast in the list of the names of vessels taken at a distance of three centuries apart. We choose this point of comparison because the materials are certain, because the two facts compared are an authentic and incontestable manifestation of the dominant thoughts of the two epochs.

In 1571, the vessels of the great maritime powers of Europe were assembled in the Gulf of Lepanto where they gained the celebrated victory over the invading fleet of *Islamism*. We give the names of the 204 galleys that took part in the contest: —

AVANT-GUARD.

The St. Magdalen of Venice.
The Son of Venice.
The Patron of Sicily.
The Captain of Sicily.

The Captain of Genoa.
The St. John of Sicily.
The St. Catherine of Venice.
Our Lady of Venice.

MAIN BODY

The St. John.
The St. Alexander.
The Captain of the Seas.
The Cross.
The Montgibel.
The Donzelle.
The Temperance.
The Adventure.
The Roccaful.

The Royal.
The Captain of Castile.
The Captain of the Pope.
The Captain of Savoy.
The Griffin.
The St. Theodore.
The Mendoza.
The Mountain.
The St. John Baptist.

P A G A N I S M I N E D U C A T I O N

The Victory.
The Pyramid.

The Victory.
The Pisane.

MAIN BODY (continued)

The Christ.
The St. Francis.
The Captain of Lomelini.
The Patron of Lomelini.
The Captain of Bondinella.
The Patron of Genoa.
The Tuscan.
L'Homme Marin.
Our Lady of Venice.
The St. Jerome.
The Peace.
The Pearl.
The Wheel.
The Pyramid.
The Palm.
The Captain de Gil d'Andreada.
The Grenada.
The Captain of Genoa.
The Captain of Venice.
The Royal Patron.

The Fig-Tree.
The Christ.
The St. John.
The Florence.
The St. George.
The Patron of Naples.
The Moon.
The Sparrow.
The Lion.
The St. Jerome.
The Captain of Grimaldo.
The Captain of David Imperial.
The St. Christopher.
The Judith.
The Armelino.
The Half-Moon.
The Doria.
The Religion of St. Peter.
The Religion of St. John.
The Captain of Malta.

LEFT WING.

The Christ Resuscitated.
The Wheel.
The Captain of Venice.
The Captain of Venice.
The Fortune of Venice.
The Sagittarius.
The Queen.
The Madonna.
The Sea Horse.
The Two Lions.
The Lion.
The Cross.
The Blessed Virgin.
The Lion of Candia.
The Christ.
The Angel.
The Pyramid.
The Lady.
The Christ Resuscitated.
The Christ Resuscitated of Venice.
The Christ of Corfu.
The Christ of Cunia.
The Christ of Venice.

The Two Dolphins.
The Three Hands.
The Lion and the Phcenix.
The St. Nicholas.
The Victory.
The Lomelline.
The Marquis.
The Fortune.
The Brave.
The Sea Horse.
The Christ.
The Ann.
The Our Lady.
The Christ Resuscitated.
The Our Lady of Venice.
The Trinity.
The Flame.
The St. John.
The Envy.
The Brave.
The St. James.
The St. Nicholas.
The Christ Resuscitated.

I N F L U E N C E O N L A N G U A G E

LEFT WING *continued.*

The Galley.	The Angel.
The Christ of Candia.	The St. Dorothy.
The St. Euphemia.	The Captain of Venice.

RIGHT WING

The Captain of Sicily.	The Patron of Lomelline.
The Captain of Nicholas Doria.	The Negrona.
The Force.	The Battard of Negroni.
The Queen of Candia.	The Fire.
The Nain.	The Eagle.
The Christ Resuscitated.	The St. Christopher.
The Man in Armor.	The Christ.
The Eagle.	The Hope.
The Palm.	The King Attila.
The Angel.	The St. Joseph.
The Lady.	The Gusman.
The Nave.	The Determined.
The Our Lady of Candia.	The Sicily.
The Christ.	The Patron of Nicholas Doria.
The St. Victor.	The Eagle.
The Patron of Grimaldi.	The St. Tryphon.
The Patron of the Seas.	The Tower.
The Margaret of Savoy.	The St. Mary.
The Diana of Genoa.	The St. John.
The Swan.	The Patron of Negronia.
The Moon.	The Monarch.
The Fortune.	The Patron of Negronia.
The Hope.	The Donzelle.
The Fury.	The Captain Andrew Doria.

REAR-GUARD.

The St. John.	The Terrestrial.	The St. Peter.
The Bscane.	The Christ.	The St. George.
The Lioness.	The Two Hands.	The St. Michael.
The Constance.	The Captain of Naples.	The Sibyl.
The Marquis.	The Patron of the Pope.	The Crane.
The St. Barbara.	The Column.	The Captain of Vasquez.
The St. Andrew.	The Madelaine.	The Sovereign.
The St. Catherine.	The Lady.	The Occasion.
The St. Bartholomew.	The World.	The Sirene.
The Holy Angel.	The Hope.	

P A G A N I S M I N E D U C A T I O N

Thus, in 1571, though pagan classics were in full force, in a fleet of two hundred and four vessels, we only find *two* pagan names, those of Diana and Sirenius, whilst there are sixty names of saints.

We now come to the second list, which is that of the French fleet in 1846, composing the names of three hundred and seventy-one vessels of all sizes, amongst which *there is not one* which bears the name of a saint,² whilst there are *eighty-five* with pagan names.

The Hannibal.	The Semiramis.	The Pandora.
The Hercules.	The Urania.	The Zenohia.
The Hector.	The Minerva.	The Armida.
The Algesiras.	The Andromeda.	The Erigone.
The Jupiter.	The Atalanta.	The Medea.
The Neptune.	The Calypso.	The Thetis.
The Nestor.	The Nereid.	The Heliopolis.
The Scipio.	The Syren.	The Penelope.
The Trident.	The Venus.	The Pomona.
The Triton.	The Alcestes.	The Psyche.
The Andromache.	The Cleopatra.	The Alchemena.
The Dido.	The Danae.	The Arian.
The Iphigenia.	The Nemesis.	The Artemise.
The Galatea.	The Alcyon.	The Cato.
The Arethusa.	The Argus.	The Pluto.
The Cybele.	The Eneelade.	The Titan.
The Danaide.	The Baucis.	The Acheron.
The Naiade.	The Belle Helène.	The Cerberus.
The Cornelia.	The Myrn~idon.	The Chimea.
The Acteon.	The Egeria.	The Cocytus.
The Adonis.	The Proserpine.	The Phaeton.
The Alcibiades.	The Bucephalus.	The Solon.
The Camilla.	The Cyclops.	The Styx.
The Griffin.	The Vulcan.	The Tartarus.
The Meldagre.	The Asmodes.	The Tenare.
The Orestes.	The Plato.	The Anachreon.
The Pylades.	The Socrates.	The Alectin.
The Mercury.	The Archimedes.	The Erebus.
The Euryale.		

This comparison certainly proves something, seeing that language, particularly official language, is the expression of the dominant idea of a people, as the thermometer is the faithful index of the temperature. But we must remember not only that these names have been imposed by the learned, but also that they are disavowed by none; besides, language has followed the same traces in everything else, so that the marine nomenclature is not an isolated fact, but simply a particular vein of a

² We must except the St. Peter, which, however, is not French-built.

universal fact. This established, in order to measure, with some degree of exactitude, the inroad paganism has made in Europe, during the last three centuries, we will make the following statement: —

In the thirteenth century paganism was to society as *two* is to *two hundred and four*.

Three centuries later, at the present time, paganism is to society as *eighty-five* is to *three hundred and sixty one*.

Whatever may be the real value of this calculation, it is evident that, to name the grandest production of its genius, of that genius it has received from God; to place its vessels under the protection of the Most High; to inspire its mariners, lost in the midst of the ocean, far from their country, exposed to all kinds of danger, to turn their thoughts heavenward, — this very Christian nation has not once pronounced the name of a saint. On the contrary, it has sought in the pagan countries all the pagan names, invoked all the celestial, terrestrial, and infernal gods to christen their ships and inspire confidence in their mariners! Florence, the queen of painting, placed every saloon of her gallery under the patronage of a pagan divinity. Everywhere we find the same language; therefore the same idea prevails everywhere.

CHAPTER XIII.

INFLUENCE OF PAGAN CLASSICS UPON THE ARTS.

THE influence we have shown pagan classics to have had on language must necessarily display itself in the arts, which are but another form wherewith to express thought. There is a Christian art as there is a Christian literature. Born the first day that Christianity celebrated its august mysteries in the cœnaculum of Jerusalem, or the catacombs of Rome, it has left everywhere the traces of its existence. Developed by time, it had, long before the fifteenth century, attained a high degree of perfection: during the Middle Ages there was an extraordinary artistic movement, such as is found at no other epoch.

At the commencement of the eleventh century the Christian world, more particularly in Italy and Gaul, seized with a divine enthusiasm, turned their attention to the renewing of their ancient basilicas, notwithstanding that many of them were rich and in a state of good preservation. A sublime rivalry animated the people and led them to build up the most magnificent monuments. The fleets of Pisa, of Genoa, and of Venice, ploughed the seas in search of alabaster, porphyry, and rich marbles. The Romans, with their gigantic edifices, their aqueducts, their roads, and their amphitheatres, never poured forth such floods of gold as did our pious ancestors to build and decorate their cathedrals. The entire world seemed to cast aside her ancient vestments, as it were to cover herself with a mantle of glory, with churches and basilicas, dazzling with gold, azure, and purple.¹ The same movement continued during the three following centuries.

¹ *Infra millesimum tertio jam fere imminente anno contigit in universo pene terrarum orbe, præcipue tamen in Italia et in Galiis, innovari ecclesiarum basilicas, licet pleræque decenter locatæ minime indiguissent, æmulabatur tamen unaquæque gens Christicolarum adversus alteram quo decentior foret. Erat enim instar, ac si mundus ipse excutiendo semet, rejecta vetustate, passim candidam ecelesiarum vestem indueret. — Glaber. apud Murator. *Antiq. Ital.* tom. iv. p. 828.*

At the end of this glorious period, Europe shone forth resplendent in masterpieces of architecture, sculpture, mosaics, painting, and works in gold and silver, such as we may admire, but can never equal. In fact, whilst the genius of faith, personified in Italy, France, England, and Germany, in a crowd of *great unknown men*, raised in the air its cathedrals, gigantic, yet harmonious in all their parts, it animated with its divine breath sculpture, which carved its lace-work pinnacles, whose slender points seem to raise the prayer to Heaven; or brought forth from stone or marble whole peoples of statues, which, to instruct the pilgrim of life, placed before his eyes the august, the formidable realities of the future world, the combats and the triumphs of those who had preceded him in the journey from time to eternity.

Directed by the immortal hand of Cimabue, Pisano, of Giotto, and of many others, the Catholic pencil wrote on the walls of the basilicas, sometimes on those of the most humble chapels, the wonders of Christianity, and raised the art to an incomparable perfection. The mosaic-worker enameled the pavement and the vaults of the temple with immortal flowers and designs of a thousand colors; the engraver graved upon the sacred vases the mysteries of the God-Man, the lives of saints, or the emblems of virtue; the worker in stained glass, the goldsmith, and the embroiderer, rivalled each other with such zeal and success, that a humble church or a poor monastery was scarcely to be found that did not enclose some precious object of art. In a word, thanks to Christianity acting in the plenitude of her power, Europe was a veritable museum, but a museum chaste and moral, where art, assuming its most exalted character, had translated into masterpieces of all kinds the spiritual principle that inspired it.

This was the state of things, when the pagan classics invaded Europe. It is in the nature of things that the arts receive their impulse from literature and walk in its path. Become pagan, literature communicated to the arts a pagan direction. Painting was the first to lend its aid to this unfortunate restoration of paganism in the bosom of Christian nations. At this epoch, for the first time, the pencil of the painter, which religion had hitherto consecrated almost exclusively to holy things, was prostituted to the reproduction of heathen divinities and mythological subjects on canvas, and on the walls and panels of palaces. From the dwellings of the great, religious pictures disappeared to give place to the infamies of fable.

To form an idea of the license and impudent obscenity of the painting of this epoch, it suffices to say that the gods and goddesses of Olympus, in a state of complete nudity, and in the most lewd attitudes; *ornament* the galleries of princely dwellings, so that the most immodest eye

cannot look upon them without causing the cheek to blush. This is why these galleries are only open to a certain class of visitors, and that on days of reception: it is possible, in those days and to those people, these pictures have nothing in them that is shocking to modesty!

It was not enough to fill the houses with Venuses, nymphs, and prostitutes; the license of art, become pagan, went so far as to soil the sanctity of the temples of the true God. Christian antiquity had constantly vested in elegant robes and draperies, and represented in attitudes of heavenly modesty its angels; in this age they completely uncovered them and presented them to the eyes of the faithful under the forms of pagan genii. They went still further, and represented the saints and the virtues as half-naked men and women, and these were offered for the veneration of the faithful.

Amongst a thousand examples, we will cite but one, — *The Last Judgment* of Michael Angelo. In this picture, where flesh predominates over the spirit, where the nakedness of member effaces the Christian idea, one admires the talent of the painter, the vigor of his pencil, the power of his genius; but the Christian feeling is scarcely to be found, and piety still less. How, for example, can we suppose that the Supreme Judge of the living and the dead should express the irritation of a simple mortal, and assume the attitude of Jupiter darting forth thunder, or of Neptune reproving the floods? In this want of truth, the Olympic myth rules the genius of the Christian artist.

Raphael himself was carried away by the torrent. The great talents he had received from Heaven, to preach Christian spiritualism, he too often prostituted to pagan sensualism. He did not blush to reproduce, we know not how many times, the most infamous of goddesses, and he polluted even his most esteemed pictures with the faces of courtesans. It was the same with Titian, with Julio Romano, and all the other disciples of the *Renaissance*. To judge at one glance of the disastrous influence of paganism on painting, it is sufficient to visit the gallery of the Palazzo Pitti at Florence. Here pagan sensualism commenced; here, as if to consecrate its cradle, most of the principal works due to its inspiration are brought together. Here we see and touch the truth, that the *Renaissance* is in painting, as in literature, the worship of form and the apostleship of sensualism.

This temple of painting is divided into fifteen *chapels*, or salons, — not *one* of them has received a Christian denomination; three have names of no significations: salons *della Stuffa*, *degl' Infanti* and *dei Poccetti*. The twelve others bear the names of pagan divinities, or of demigods: the salon of *Venus*, of *Apollo*, of *Mars*, of *Jupiter*, of *Saturn*, of the *Iliad*, of the *Education of Jupiter*, of *Ulysses returning to Ithaca*,

of *Prometheus*, of *Justice*, of *Flora*, and of *Music*. Lest the thought which presided at the arrangement of these galleries should be misunderstood, the last of them are the most magnificent; that of Venus is the first. Each tutelary divinity is painted on the ceiling of its particular salon, surrounded by its *chaste attributes*, and accomplishing some mythological act. Under the four panels of the sanctuary are seen the pictures of the great maasters of the *Renaissance*, like *ex-votos* to the god or goddess to whose intercession the artist owed the inspiration of his genius.

It is impossible to find a more literal definition of the artistic thought that prevailed in the sixteenth century; a more convincing proof of the adulterous alliance of painting and paganism at this epoch. The gallery of Florence seems to say to the young artist obliged to visit it: Raise your eyes to the vaults of my salons; behold the gods of painting; behold those who have inspired the *chefs-d'œuvre* that are suspended at their feet. You have no need to seek inspiration in the Heaven of Christians: Olympus is sufficient — the road is marked out to you by the luminous traces of these great masters; labor! imitate! hope!

And they are called upon to imitate pictures that may be divided into two great classes; those which treat of profane and those which treat of religious subjects.

The first are handled with a perfection that calls to mind certain frescoes of Pompeii; these pictures are executed with great spirit. There are vignettes before which a surgeon might give a course of anatomy. In all that regards the *natural*, nothing is wanting. Proportion, pose, and color, material form and physical expression, are given with an incomparable perfection.

As to the religious subjects, it is easy to imagine what they must be: the painter has made them after his image, as he himself is formed after the pagan model; there is nothing left to desire, as to form. We have handsome men and women; Greeks, nymphs, and goddesses; but as to saints, few or none at all. You discover involuntarily in the saints, the martyrs, and the angels, a strong family likeness to Apollo, Jupiter, the Muses, the heroes and heroines of antiquity, which clearly shows the inspiration of paganism. You seek Heaven, and only find Olympus; the eye admires, but the heart does not pray. The whole order of sentiments deposited in our soul by religion, and which compose our supernatural being, remains without an interpreter. The painter does not comprehend us; his idiom is not ours; he speaks the language of *flesh*, and we that of the *spirit*.

To be silent on spiritualism is the first failing of painting after the school of the *Renaissance*, and its first reproach should be that it has

become the most dangerous apostle of sensuality. It deserves another, which is much more serious. Before its divorce, it did not paint the naked, for two reasons: the first, because the Christian religion, essentially spiritual and moral, forbade it; and painting, the docile child of a chaste mother, considered it a duty to depict an order of ideas superior to sense. The second, which is the consequence of the first, because to paint the naked was by no means necessary to the perfection of Christian art, which sought exclusively spiritual beauty; and this beauty is reflected solely from the eyes and the expression of the countenance. Hence the incomparable purity of the figures, and the divine type, which distinguishes the works of the great masters before the *Renaissance*. This it was that absorbed all their care and talents, the rest was looked upon as merely accessory, and consequently treated with a certain negligence, that has become the subject of endless reproach, which is pushed to a point that may be called unjust.

This dignity, this holy mission of art, was unknown to the new artists. Formed in the pagan school, they only saw material beauty, and to display it they painted the naked, and they painted the unfortunate, with a richness and an effrontery that shocks the eye of virtue, and makes the most immodest blush. Is this progress? Is this the legitimate use of art? Is it not rather a profanation? Has God given man genius, to corrupt with greater success?

Under the influence of paganism, painting, with some honorable exceptions, ceased to be the tongue of spiritualism, to become that of sensualism. As to matter, it lost infinitely more than it gained, by the revolution of the sixteenth century; and with regard to *form*, who can say that in remaining Catholic, the art would not have attained that correctness of design, that regularity of lineament, that perfection of pose, of draperies, and other accessories, which the *Renaissance* glorifies itself in having given, but which experience would have developed without it? That which can do more, can do less. Catholic art had raised itself to ideal and supernatural beauty; a little practice would have put it in possession of the secret of sensible beauty. In proof of this, we may cite the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Giotto, of B. Angelico, of Gaddi, and of many others. The chapels of Spain and Rome possess several ancient figures as beautiful in style and expression as those of Raphael, whilst the thought is more profound and the conception more vast. The *Madona* of St. Marie in *Cosmedino*, our Lord in the church of Saints Cosmo and Damian, in the Forum, are admirable in every respect; the majesty of the figures is such as Michael Angelo, Raphael, and all the painters who have followed them, have never attained.

I N F L U E N C E O N T H E A R T S

CHAPTER XIV.
CONTINUATION.

ALTHOUGH painting, from the commencement of the *Renaissance*, has too often lent itself to pagan sensualism, we must acknowledge that it did not estrange itself from religion without regret. The school founded by Fra Bartolomeo, and by the blessed Angelico, long struggled against the invasion, and with great success. We cannot say as much for sculpture.

Scarcely was paganism inaugurated, when the sculptors and their patrons allowed themselves to be carried away, almost to fanaticism, after the models of antiquity. They neither spared expense nor labor to discover the statues of the divinities of Olympia and the great men of antiquity, and their exertions were crowned with success. Whilst the Christian ages reserved their enthusiasm for the discovery of some celebrated martyr, and their gold to raise temples in honor of the heroes of the faith, we see in the ages of the *Renaissance* the enthusiasm of Christians expended on the gods of fable, and their gold consecrated to the building of sumptuous palaces to lodge the divinities and the men of paganism. If a statue, or even a fragment of Venus, an arm, a foot, a trunk, a hand, a nose of Jupiter, or of Saturn, were found, the academies immediately assembled, and with great gravity ordered an investigation. Commentaries appeared in all directions, whole cities were on the move and rejoiced, as if some great public good had been discovered. These statues of pagan gods and men, inscriptions, vases, urns, tombs, and monuments of all kinds, were carried to people, not only museums (which to a certain extent is worthy of praise), but palaces and private houses.

From what passed at Rome, we may judge of what took place elsewhere. One day it was announced that some workmen had discovered, in the environs of the *Seven Salons*, a marble group of admirable beauty, from the Greek chisel. At this news, the artists and amateurs hastened to the garden of Titus, where they identified the *Laocoon*, such as Pliny described it. Enthusiasm was at its height: in the evening, all the church bells rang to announce the happy discovery. The

poets did not sleep that night; they prepared to salute the return of the ancient *chef-d'œuvre* to light, with sonnets, hymns, and canzonets; the next day there was a general *fête* in Rome. The statue, ornamented with flowers and evergreens, was paraded through the streets to the sound of music; priests formed the line through which it went, and uncovered their heads as it passed; the streets were crowded with people, and they accompanied, with songs of joy, the triumphal entry of the Laocoon to the Capitol.

The statue being placed on its pedestal, Julius II retired to his apartment, when a new *fête* commenced, in which the Cardinal Sadolet, his head crowned with ivy, chanted the happy event in an ode, which all humanists know by heart.¹

In the evening, Sadolet found in his chamber a beautiful manuscript of Plato; it was a present from the Pope. As to Felix de Fredis, who discovered the precious statue, the Sovereign Pontiff gave him a portion of the revenues arising from the tax upon salt at the gate of St. John Lateran, and appointed him notary apostolic.² Is it necessary to add, that the fanatics of the *Renaissance* abused, in the most extraordinary manner, the encouragement given by the pontiffs?

Lest the people should be deprived of the sight of the chaste objects discovered, they were exposed at the cross-roads and public places; they were displayed on the façades of palaces and private houses, where the piety of former ages had placed the august Sign of the Cross and the images of the saints. These remnants of paganism, however, were only to be had at a high price, and but few could procure them; yet every *gentleman*, every family, desired to possess such treasures.

As the most obscene works of paganism had been translated into the vulgar tongue, for the benefit of the people, so the *Christian* sculptors rivaled the ancients in the production of the gods and goddesses of Olympia, in all kinds of material. The engraver multiplied to infinity, and frequently added to the obscenity of the original. By these means, all the infamies of mythology became so common, that every Christian, however poor he might be, was in a position to procure them; in place of the portraits of our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, were to be found those of Jupiter, Venus, Cupid, Diana, and others.

It was now that sensualism, from the hands of the sculptor, the engraver, and the painter, inundated Christian Europe. From the palaces, where they had taken the place of the Savior, of Mary, and of the Saints, Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, Venus, the Graces, the nymphs, the

¹ *Ecce alto terræ e tumulo, etc.*

² Audin, *Vie de Luther*; Winkelmann, *Hist. de l'Art*.

satyrs, the gods and demigods, descended in triumph into the public places of the cities; ornamented the fountains, peopled the public walks, embellished the parks and gardens of villas, giving to all, at all times, the most eloquent lessons of lubricity. The child found at the domestic hearth, or, at least, could not go out without meeting images, which, in blasting his young imagination, bent his heart towards the Earth and the senses; less happy than the child of the Middle Ages, who, in the paternal dwelling, as in the streets of the city, or by the roadside, was sure to meet holy images; the quaint but touching statues of Jesus and his Mother, or of the ancient patrons of Catholic Europe. It is easy to understand how this continual vision of the superior world led to the most elevated spiritualism, ennobled the heart, and encouraged virtue.

It was not sufficient that pagan sensualism had defiled profane places and edifices, it dared to penetrate even the temples of the true God. The tombs, which, up to this time, the piety of ancient artists had embellished with Christian figures and emblems, began to be decorated according to pagan taste. Indecent statues represented Christian virtues. The scandal was pushed so far at one time, that, instead of honoring the memory of the dead, the figures were better calculated to excite the passions of the living, and it was found necessary to cover them with a vestment of bronze. At length, all Christian emblems vanished from the mausoleum, to give way to pagan ones, so that, were it not for the temple in which they were placed, rather to defile than embellish it, nothing in these monuments would identify them as Christian tombs.

What is not less sacrilegious, although more ridiculous, is, the fanciful mixture of Christianity and paganism. *Religion* and *Time*, *Hope* and *Love*, bound together, each with its attributes. From a thousand examples we will select the tomb of the Dauphin, placed in the center of the choir of the cathedral of Sens. But whether or no there be a mixture in these tombs, all the figures, as with the reredoses of the altars, are taken from pagan models. Genii become angels; Diana, the Blessed Virgin; Endymion or Apollo, Our Lord and the Saints; Cæsar and Neptune, Moses; the philosophers, St. Joseph and the prophets.

To be just, however, we will say, that sculpture, as also painting, preserved something Christian, even after the general invasion of paganism, but architecture nothing at all. From the commencement of the sixteenth century, architecture entirely forsook the Christian type. From this epoch, public opinion declared that not only the palaces, the houses, the theaters, and all profane edifices, but also the churches, must be built in the Greek or Roman style. This was diametrically opposed to the constant custom of the Church. It is true, that when the

Christians of former ages had neither the time nor the resources necessary for building churches, they made use of the temples of the false gods after having purified and despoiled them of all vestiges of idolatry. But when they had occasion to build new churches, the Christian architect never took a pagan temple for his model. The Christian monuments that remain prove this incontestable fact, that *from the origin of the Church to the sixteenth century, no new church was ever built in the pagan style.*

This must not be attributed to a want of money or of models. The Cæsars were no sooner Christians than they spared no expense to give magnificent churches to religion; and the celebrated temples of Greece and Italy still remained in all their integrity. But the Christian artists disdained them, for they found the pagan style ill-adapted to Catholic worship, and contrary to its genius. Under the name of Byzantine architecture, our forefathers in the faith established a new manner of building their churches. From Constantinople, where it took its birth, it passed into the West. Modified by a deep study of the relations of art and faith, and assisted by the counsel of the bishops, who carefully examined the new edifices, this style arrived at the highest degree of perfection under the name of Gothic. To this we owe the immense, the magnificent cathedrals of France, of England, and of Germany, those structures in which grace, and richness, and variety of form, unite in the majesty of the whole, and show forth, in all its splendor, the glory of the genius of the faith that inspired them. But when, at the end of the fifteenth century, the pagan works began to be set forth as the type of the beautiful, not only in letters but also in the arts, the Christian architecture, consecrated by fifteen centuries, and illustrated by countless works of incomparable beauty, was treated as barbarism and banished from Christian cities. That no vestige might remain of the products of the ages of faith, the architects, or rather the vandals, of this senseless age, transported by the blind fury that animated the barbarians of the fifth and sixth centuries to throw down the obscene temples of paganism, destroyed the pious, the venerable sanctuaries of the Christian ages.

Thus it was, to cite but one example, that the antique and venerable basilica of St. Peter of the Vatican, an incomparable monument, not only of the religion of Europe, of the piety of the faithful, of the munificence of the popes and kings, but also, according to Bramante, a unique *chef-d'œuvre* of Christian art, was relentlessly thrown down to give place to the Greco-Roman edifice that the *Renaissance* has substituted for it; neither the expostulations nor the anger of this great artist could check the hand of the destroyer.

The same vandalism extended its ravages everywhere. Who can count the ancient churches, the chapels, the towers, the tombs, either completely destroyed, buried in the earth, or disfigured by unworthy mutilations, or by additions still more vile, so that at length Europe could not show a single edifice, ancient or modern, that was not in the Greek style, or stamped with paganism? In the Middle Ages, even civil architecture took a religious character, and produced superb edifices, as may still be seen, particularly in Venice, and in some of the cities of France, Belgium, and England: yet the sixteenth century undertook to restore, or to renew, even the churches in the pagan style; and this fanaticism was carried so far, that, but for the energetic intervention of the ecclesiastical authority, the ancient Christian monuments that had escaped the fury of the barbarians would have fallen under the blows of Christians themselves.

This opposition, which we must avow did not always continue, was far from saving all our edifices. "During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the infatuation for a style of architecture recently adopted was such, that the system of restoration, applied to our ancient religious edifices, was a misfortune, not only as respects art, but also their solidity. They were treated without regard to the principles on which they were constructed, reproached with being out of harmony with what was then considered beautiful in architecture, and tortured to submit them to the taste of the day."³

Need we be astonished at these acts of vandalism which still make us tremble? Need we even be surprised that the divorce of architecture and religion should be continued in our own times with a kind of good faith, and in the midst of a concert of praise, which will be the wonder of future ages? Must we, in fine, wonder at the aberration into which public spirit has been led, when we hear men, distinguished for their intelligence and taste, advance, as a double axiom, that pagan architecture is the style of the *beautiful*, and Christian architecture the opposite?

After having quoted a pompous eulogy of the new temple of St. Peter of the Vatican, *where the most eager and intelligent curiosity finds wherewith to satisfy itself, where the most critical and talented artists come to admire and improve themselves*, Feller thus terminates his article on Julius II: — "He encouraged painting, sculpture, and

³ Report presented to the Minister of Public Worship on the situation of the religious edifices, by M. Contencin, Director of the Administration of Public Worship, January; 1851.

architecture; and in his time the fine arts began to disengage themselves from *the rubbish of the barbarous Gothic.*"

Speaking of Christian architecture, Fenelon expresses himself in these terms: — "The inventors of the style of architecture called *Gothic*, and which is said to be that of the Arabs, doubtless believed they had surpassed that of the Greeks. A Greek edifice has no ornament that does not serve to embellish the work; the pieces necessary to support it, such as the columns and the cornice, are graceful merely from their proportions; all is simple, all is measured, all is confined to the useful; there is neither boldness nor caprice to impose upon the eye; the proportions are so just, that nothing appears very great, although all may be so; everything confines itself to satisfying just reason. On the contrary, in Gothic architecture, an immense arch springing from slender pillars rises to the clouds; it seems as if all must fall, yet it lasts for centuries; the building is full of windows, of roses, and of points; the stone seems cut like pasteboard; all is open work, all is in the air. Is it not natural that the first Gothic architects were proud at having surpassed, by their vain refinement, the simplicity of the Greek? Change the names, put poets and orators in the place of architects. Lucan must naturally think himself greater than Virgil; Seneca, that he shone more than Sophocles; Tasso might aspire to leave Virgil and Homer in the rear. These authors would be mistaken in thinking this."⁴

Thus, according to Fenelon, all that Christian art has ever produced of the most beautiful, is but bad taste, and cannot be compared to the works of paganism. Christian poets and architects do not approach those of the pagans, any nearer than Lucan does Virgil, or Seneca, Sophocles!

We will sum up the preceding by applying the same reflections to architecture as we have to painting: we will say that, after a patient and dispassionate examination of the subject, the *Renaissance* is nothing but a resurrection of paganism in art as well as in literature; the retaliation of pagan sensualism formerly conquered by Christian spiritualism; an immense step in arrear, and not a progress; a source of shame and error for Europe, and not a principle of light and glory. Such are the great advantages that we have gathered from the pagan classics. There are others which we shall make known in the following chapters.

⁴ *Lettre sur l'Eloq.* at the end.

PAGANISM IN EDUCATION

CHAPTER XV.

INFLUENCE OF CLASSIC PAGANISM ON PHILOSOPHY.

WHILST classic paganism declared itself in the artistic order by naturalism and sensualism, it showed itself in the purely intellectual order by an influence not less fatal, though less palpable. Nowhere has it made greater ravages than in philosophy. We call philosophy that ardent search after truth which regards God, man, the world, and beings in general, their nature, and the relation they bear to each other. To explore this immense domain, it is easy to conceive that reason requires a certain point of departure, an unvarying compass, an infallible touchstone, to assist it in distinguishing truth from falsehood. Under the empire of Christianity, all these conditions of success were placed at her disposal.

A docile child of faith, reason began by listening to the lessons of its mother; then, taking for its point of departure the truths it had learnt at this infallible school, it applied them to the investigation of hidden subjects, and drew forth results fruitful of utility. Were reason in doubt, it consulted faith, and compared the discoveries it had made with the teaching it had received, always turning its successes to the glory of religion. In other terms, and to speak the language of the greatest philosopher the world ever knew, in the scientific system created by Christianity, and so well understood in the Middle Ages, the sciences resembled a well-regulated family. Theology was the mother, and all the sciences her daughters; the mother took the direction and gave the orders, and the daughters labored, each one in its sphere, for the common good. The supreme object of all their efforts was the glorification and the service of their queen, who applied to the moral and physical good of mankind the results obtained by each science, and by philosophy itself, her eldest daughter.¹

¹ Theologia imperat omnibus aliis scientiis tanquam *principalis*, et utitur in *obsequium* sui omnibus aliis scientiis, quasi *usualis* . . . ita ut, cum finis *totius philosophiæ* sit intra finem theologiæ, et ordinatus ad ipsum, *theologia debeat omnibus aliis scientiis*

From the certainty of the point of departure, the infallible direction in the investigation, and the universal convergence of all the sciences towards the same end, arose that exemption from all serious error — that lucidness in definition, that fecundity in application, that character of unity and universality in Science, and those magnificent *speculations* which are to be found in the works of St. Augustine, St. Anselm, of Albert the Great, Alexander Alesius, of St. Bonaventura and St. Thomas, like a vast mirror illuminating with their immortal splendors the most abstruse questions on religion and politics, on civil, domestic, and even material matters.

Immortal splendors, since the thousand systems of philosophy which the last three centuries have engendered, far from obscuring their luster, have but added to their brilliancy; immortal, because it is still in them we must seek the solution of all the problems which torment the world. “Heir to the philosophy of the Fathers of the Church, the philosophy of the Middle Ages,” says M. Møller, “resting on an unvarying belief, remains always the same as to principle, and thus acquires, by secular labors, a magnificence and an extent, which has never been equalled by any other philosophy.”²

But things became completely changed with the *Renaissance*. At this epoch, a thousand voices were raised, from all points of Europe, to proclaim the philosophical systems of Greece the true type of philosophy, the model of free discussion, and the vast field in which reason must engage if she would discover truth. The first object, with this view, was to persuade reason to make herself the fulcrum, and to abandon the teaching of the Church for the basis of her philosophical investigations. As reason had been induced to sever with her ancient literature and art, from its being represented as the type of ignorance and barbarism, a thousand advocates maintained that the Catholic philosophy of the Middle Ages fettered the human mind, and was the type of servility.

And why? — Because it took for its point of departure, for its compass, its touchstone, the indefinable truths of faith. Say then, that geometry, chemistry, — all the sciences, in fact, — confine the intellect, because all, without exception, set out from axioms that are unexplained or inexplicable.

imperare, et uti iis quæ in eis traduntur. — D. Tr. in lib. i. Sentent. Prolog. Non accipit sua principia ab aliis scientiis, sed immediate à Deo per revelationem. Et ideò non accipit ab aliis scientiis tanquam à superioribus, sed utitur eis tanquam inferioribus, et ancillis.

— Id. *S. Theol.* p. 1, q. i. art. 5.

² Møller, *State of Modern Philosophy in Germany*, p. 4.

It is pretended that the Church shackles the liberty of thought, and that the dogmas imposed by her upon reason prevent the free exercise of the mind. To prove that these accusations are founded, it must be shown that the dogmas of the Church are not truths, which, as such, form the basis of all true philosophy. In fact, if our dogmas are truths, where is the reason for admitting that philosophy, which seeks truth, can be crippled in accepting a truth of any kind? Hitherto no one has ever proved that the Catholic dogmas are not truths. They are ignored and rejected, but it is beyond human power to show that the Catholic faith is in error.

We may go still farther, and ask of the advocates of regenerated paganism, of the panegyrists of the pretended intellectual emancipation, if a philosophy that accepts, as a point of departure, the truths of the Catholic Church, is more restrained, less free than that which takes human reason for its only basis? It must be evident to every reasonable man, that an idea, whatever it may be, can never limit the exercise of the reason, but only in as much as the idea itself is limited. If, then, the Catholic dogmas were not superior to the human understanding, the reproaches of the apostles of independent philosophy would be well founded. But religious truths are so profound, so inexhaustible, that no created mind is capable of embracing them in all their extent, to give a complete explanation of them. Thus the divine revelations, instead of confining the faculties of the human mind, furnish never-failing aliment to thought.³

These simple observations, which were sufficient to annihilate the pretensions of the innovators, either were not made, or were not listened to. The pagan schools were invaded from all parts: to enter them, it was necessary to subscribe to this maxim of Epicurus: that *“true philosophy is to be found with the Greeks only, because everywhere else tradition reigns.”* Catholic tradition, the teaching of the Church, was rejected as a shackle, and the sufficiency of human reason was solemnly proclaimed.

This principle prepared the final consequences we reap in our days. “Christianity has lost its ancient empire, and faith has withdrawn. Abandoned by public spirit, convicted of inferiority by modern reason, hostile to the principles of our institutions and laws, it ought not, it cannot, preside over our national education.

“It cannot — because its lessons are no longer listened to; it ought not, — for the first object of education is to form citizens, to develop the

³ See Moeller, *State of Modern Philosophy in Germany*, p. 4.

intelligence, and to inspire a love for, and the observance of, the laws of the country . . .

“Christianity is no more. We must have a religion: who will prepare it? My reply is foreseen: reason has vanquished Christianity in surpassing it, and it is for her to replace what she has destroyed.”⁴

Soon the two great philosophical systems of antiquity, those of Plato and Aristotle; that is to say, of idealism and empiricism, unite under their opposite banners all the professors of philosophy and their disciples. Under the banner of Plato ranged Italy, directed by the Medicis of Florence, Marcilius Ficinus, Andrew Porta, and other distinguished personages. Aristotle rallied under his flag, first, England, afterwards Germany and France. Commencing with the *Renaissance*, these two philosophical lines, which, though parallel, were opposed, extend to our days.

It is remarkable that the proud pretensions, the absolute want of power, the eternal groping, the fluctuations, the contradictions, the monstrous errors, and the formidable applications of this pagan philosophy, are exactly the same in modern Europe as they were in the bosom of ancient Greece. Now, as formerly, she may write on the door of the schools — *This is the laboratory of all absurdities*.⁵ Drunk with herself, she falls from one extreme to the other, without ever discovering the first medium of truth. From materialism she rushes into idealism, from pantheism to skepticism, to end now, as formerly, in the bottomless abyss of universal rationalism and the ruin of society.

With Thales of Miletus, her first organ in antiquity and founder of the *Ionic school*, she proclaims that water and moisture, that is to say, matter, is the first principle of all things. The *Italian school*, with Pythagoras, its founder, gave the former the lie, and endeavored to make spiritualism predominate. Fifty years later, the *Eléatic school*, whose principal organs, Xenophon of Colophon, Parmenides and Melissus, professed ideal pantheism, and on many points went as far as skepticism. With the *Atomistic school*, founded by Leucippus, materialism is paramount. From the contradiction of systems, and the daily increasing doubts their natural consequence, arose the *School of Sophistry*. Champions, for and against, combat the most contradictory propositions. A few years more, and Greek society, already on the wane, will be annihilated under their blows.

Socrates came, and undertook to oppose a barrier to the torrent of doubt. He proposed moral philosophy, and formed some disciples, the

⁴ *Liberté de Penser*, Janvier, 1851.

⁵ Nihil tam absurdi quod non dicatur ab aliquo philosopho. — *Cicero*.

most celebrated of whom was Plato. Father of the *Academic school*, Plato displayed all the resources of his genius in behalf of spiritualism. Aristotle, his disciple, snatched the scepter from the hand of spiritualism and gave it to empiricism, who bequeathed it to the Peripatetics, who soon advanced towards materialism, with which Epicurus completed the union. Disciple of the successor of Aristotle, he realized the last practical consequence of the philosophy of the Stagirite. His system is immorality: pleasure is the sovereign good of man. Founder of the *Stoic school*, Zeno opposed himself to Epicurism. "The body is everything," said Epicurus: "The body is nothing," replied Zeno. "Pleasure is the sole good," continued Epicurus: "The greatest pain is not an evil," replied Zeno.

Towards the end of the second century came Sextus Empiricus, who unmercifully reported all the quarrels and absurdities of philosophy, and drew the final conclusion from these debates of a thousand years. The first word that fell from his pen is *contradiction*; the last, *skepticism*; and such is the shameful result of pagan philosophy. What progress has it realized during the long period of its existence? What truth has it discovered? What virtue has it developed? What society has it rendered better or more lasting? Listen to the reply of one free from suspicion: — "The history of philosophy," says M. Ancillon, "presents a veritable chaos. The notions, the principles, the systems succeed, combat, and efface each other, without our being able to discover the point of departure, the aim of all this commotion, or the real object of these constructions, which are equally bold and weak."

If philosophy was powerless for good, what must we say of its influence for evil? "The great errors of the mind were almost unknown before the Greek philosophy. This it was that gave rise to them, or at least, that developed them; the weakening of respect for traditions, and the substitution of the principle of particular examination for that of faith." ⁶ The sophists prepared the way for barbarism.

⁶ *Essai sur l'Indiff.* tom. iii. p. 58.

CHAPTER XVI.
CONTINUATION.

RESUSCITATED in the middle of the fifteenth century, pagan philosophy gave, for the second time, a proof of its inability to discover truth, and its capacity for engendering error. We do not say this merely for the sake of doing so after so many others; it is an incontestable truth, upon which we must not fail to insist. Without speaking of the monstrous errors with respect to God, man, the world, with which it has contaminated the history of Europe during the last three centuries, the rationalism of the present day, which threatens society with a return to barbarism, is its last phase.

In fact, the Catholic tradition rejected as an impediment, and the infallibility of reason given as an axiom, what is there to prevent rationalism, with all its horrors, from becoming an article of faith, if the fancy of the philosophy should proclaim it? As we have seen, the absolute sufficiency of reason was established, though tacitly, from the first day of the *Renaissance*. All philosophical investigations took place under its occult influence. The mask was soon flung aside, and Luther proclaimed reason sovereign in matters of religion. Descartes extended its empire, and clearly proclaimed the universality of its rights.¹

Listen to his admirers and faithful organs: “An independent spirit, a bold innovator, and possessed of extraordinary power, Descartes was too fond of his own ideas not to recognize the authority of individual reason, and its right to examine and judge all *kinds of doctrine*. Descartes has the glory of having proclaimed and practiced these principles, and of being the author of the intellectual reform which bore fruit in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and which still, more than ever, exercises its *influence in the philosophical world*. *At the present day, thanks to Descartes, we are all Protestants in philosophy,*

¹ Rome condemned the Logic of Descartes in 1643. Protestantism itself anathematized it at the synod of Dordrecht in 1656, so much did the Cartesian doubt menace the little belief that remained with the Reformers!

*as we are, thanks to Luther, all philosophers in religion. . . . We will not believe, but according to the evidence of truth.”*²

We will now examine the operations of philosophy returned to paganism. With Plato, it professed pure spiritualism, and soon fell, with Spinoza, into ideal pantheism. At the school of Aristotle it became empiricism. Bacon of Verulam taught that matter is the cause of causes, itself without cause: Locke found in sensation the sole source of ideas: Condillac imagined man to be a statue, and Maillet proved him to be a carp, whilst the Baron d’Holbach, in his famous *Système de la Nature*, summing up the principles and consequences of this school, gives us as a manual of reason and conduct, the monstrous assemblage of all the absurdities, of all the turpitudes of materialism and atheism, both ancient and modern. Hobbes, Hartley, Berkeley, Priestley, Helvetius, Lamétrie; all the leading philosophers of England, of France, and in part of Europe, applauded the courage of their *confrère*, who declared aloud, what they thought in silence. Society itself became incredulous, and materialists at the school of the modern pagans proclaimed, with antiquity, that truth is a chimera; pleasure the only law, the only duty.

The ancient sophists opened the way to barbarism, their modern disciples gave society up to the destroyers of 1793. *The mind of the sages had prepared the revolution, the arm of the people executed it.* So much extolled for three centuries, taught with such care to youth, explained with so much pains by all the talented men of Europe, pagan philosophy was henceforth judged. Yet, in spite of this frightful experience, human reason was not cured. Its divorce with faith, and the empassioned love of its pretended emancipation, had left in it the germ of evil.

On the still moldering ruins of social order, pagan philosophy puts forth the same pretensions to the intellectual direction of the human race. Now, as in the days of antiquity, its last word is Epicurism. Cabanis dared to say to this society, bathed in blood, “The nerves are the principle of thought, the origin of ideas; effect is necessarily of the same nature as the cause; consequently, thought is material; man is but a machine, without any other difference between him and his dog than that which is found in the angle of his physiognomy.” Destutt de Tracy lent himself to this vile system, in his arid ideology. If Cabanis was the physiologist, and Destutt de Tracy the metaphysician of the materialism of the nineteenth century, Volney was its moralist. “*Self-preservation*,” says he, “is the great law of human nature. Thus, good and evil are all that tends to the preservation of organic man, and all that tends to his

² *Globe*, No. 147.

destruction. The greatest good is life; the greatest evil, death: there is nothing beyond this physical happiness, nothing worse than bodily suffering: the supreme good is health.”³

Charity, devotedness, faith, hope, sacrifice of personal interest to the public good, are virtues of fools for the profit of knaves. Murder is a duty, as often as it is useful. ME, that is, my body, and nothing else, this is the whole of religion; none but fools can have any other. — Such is the philosophy of Volney. When we think that such maxims were promulgated, with a frightful profusion, for fifteen years; when we remember that they have penetrated all classes of society; that its graces and the simplicity of its style have made the *Catechism* of Volney the book of the salon and of the cottage, need we be surprised at the Epicurean character of our epoch?

In this system God is nothing; the soul is nothing: all is material. There was a reaction, however, in our pagan philosophy, as there had already been against the ancient. Royer, Collard, Cousin, Jouffroy, and the *Globe* undertook the mission of restoring spiritualism, but without base or compass; their philosophy has fallen into pantheism and eclecticism, without having dethroned the sensualism of Volney. Pantheism is to be found in every letter in the works of Cousin. As to eclecticism, it is nothing else but skepticism and rationalism under another name. One of its most fervent apostles, Jouffroy, died in the agonies of doubt. All still living, who have been nourished upon it, are complete unbelievers. That eclecticism is rationalism in the most ample acceptance of the term, the following will prove.

The opinion boldly avowed and clearly taught by the organs of eclecticism is that truth, such as it should be to satisfy all the demands of reason, is still to be found: that no philosophical system, no religion, not even Christianity, is an adequate expression of it. Hence the necessity of a general research into all systems and religions, in order to select what is pure in them, and from these scattered truths to form a complete creed. But where is the touchstone by which to distinguish truth from error? Must the reason of each individual, or that of one in particular, be acknowledged infallible? In this case reason is deified and a complete rationalism established. Yet this is what those of this school admit: “for,” say they, “to individual reason belongs the right of examining and judging all kinds of doctrine.”⁴

Have they then any new doctrines to substitute for the old ones? — not yet, they seek them. Their reply deserves to be known: — “It is for us

³ *Hist. de la Philosoph. au Dix-neuvième Siècle*, tom. ii. p. 119.

⁴ *Globe*, No. 147.

to make these doctrines which ought to preside over our *moral, religious, political, and literary* life; for our fathers have only left us such as are sterile and exhausted. . . . We must therefore *forge* new ones; this necessity of our epoch is known, or at least felt, by all.”⁵

It will be seen that rationalism never put forth prouder pretensions; never did reason, emancipated from the tutelage of faith by pagan philosophy, show itself more stupidly proud, and never was the world nearer to a frightful catastrophe, the inevitable result of a revolt pushed even to the imitation of Satan. What is still more frightful, and shows how deeply pagan philosophy has penetrated the minds of the present generation, is that these pretensions are boldly declared without disguise or shame. Reason is called a *permanent revelation from God*, and that its rights must not be *sacrificed under any pretense whatever*.⁶ The disciples of this school think themselves generous towards Catholics, in permitting religion to take the same footing with reason, to divide with her the empire of man, giving to one the sovereignty of the mind, and to the other the direction of the heart. “Religion and philosophy are two immortal sisters which cannot perish. *Religion and philosophy were born on the same day*. The day on which God put religion in the heart of man, he placed *philosophy in his mind*; they must live *together, side by side, and for ever*, never seeking to be separated, and, in time of trial, let them draw nearer each other, rather than aim at mutual destruction.”⁷

Already, however, the logicians of paganism deny this pretended equality, declaring that religion is only a principle of obscurity and corruption, and that reason alone is sovereign. “I will prove,” wrote formerly a disciple of M. Cousin,⁸ “that the *Catechism stultifies* the child; afterwards I will prove that *it corrupts* him. . . . Reason must reign sovereign in its domain. This was the case in the seventeenth century, when Descartes proclaimed the definitive emancipation of thought, and in the respect which he still expressed for the Church and theology, it is easy to discover a little irony with a good deal of prudence . . . Is it necessary here to refer to Voltaire and Rousseau? Is it necessary to add that their doctrines, inspired by the spirit of the age, possessed themselves of French society so completely, as to be able to realize their principles, to a certain extent, in the order of politics, substituting the revolution of 1789 for the spirit of ancient days? Thus reason, but newly

⁵ *Ib.* No. 56.

⁶ *Discours de M. Lamartine*, Nov. 1843.

⁷ M. Thiers, *Discours sur l’Instr. Publique*, 18e Janv. 1850.

⁸ M. Jacques, in the *Liberté de Penser*.

emancipated, became henceforth *sovereign*. Deified by the people, reason and liberty replaced the fallen gods of Christianity. The Convention decrees, *in the name of reason*, the existence of the Supreme Being; he has no other worship, no other religion, than that of reason and of liberty. This is what history teaches.”

Yes, this is the history of modern philosophy under the influence of pagan classics, not only in France, but throughout Europe.

We might trace this philosophy everywhere giving truth to the same errors, preparing the same crimes, developing the same calamities as in France.⁹ In Germany, philosophy has not only arrived at complete paganism, but has become so perverted as only to invoke God to blaspheme him. To justify our assertion, we will cite the opinions of its most accredited representatives, with the appreciations of their disciples.

“There are four things,” says Goethe, “that I detest equally, — tobacco and bells, bugs and Christianity.” This horrible blasphemy, according to *La Liberté de Penser*, “is the most natural expression of the invincible repugnance that the Olympic Jupiter of modern times felt towards the æsthetic Christian. It is by instinct that Goethe hates the moral revolution, that he has substituted the pale and sickly virgin for the antique Venus, and the ideal perfection of the human body, represented by the gods of Greece, for the meager image of a crucified man, whose limbs are distorted by four nails. After this it is not surprising that we find the *colossal head of Jupiter* placed before his *bed and turned towards the rising sun, in order that he may address his morning prayers to him on waking*. Inaccessible alike to tears and fear, Jupiter was truly the God of this *great man*.”

“Hegel pronounced, with equal decision, in favor of the religious ideal of the Hellenists, and against the intrusion of the Syrians or Galileans. The legend of Christ appeared to him conceived in the same system as the Alexandrian biography of Pythagoras; all is related *with the most common-place reality*, and by no means in a poetic spirit; it is a mixture of mean simplicity and tame chimeras, such as is found with those who have no imagination. The Old and New Testaments are of no æsthetic value in his eyes.

“It is the same theme that has so often excited the mirth and humor of Heinrich Heine. But M. Ludwig Feuerbach, chief of the young German school, is perhaps the most complete expression of this antipathy against Christianity; and if the nineteenth century is to witness the *end of the world, it is him they must call Antichrist*.”

⁹ See *l'Etat de la Phil. Moderne en Allemagne*; par Moeller.

Little is wanting for them to define Christianity as a perversion of human nature. . . . “None but the ignorant, or those of superficial minds, can reproach antiquity with materialism. Antiquity represents nature and finish; falsified as we are by our supernatural ideas, and our thirst after the infinite, this art, so well defined; this moral, so simple; this system of life, so clearly marked out on all sides, seems to us a narrow reality. Castor and Pollux, Diana and Minerva, are cold and matter-of-fact, because they represent nature healthy and normal. But Christian spirituality is, at bottom, much more material . . . All the false ideas to be found in the world, *as regards morality and æsthetics*, are from Christianity. Greece, with a divine tact, seized the perfect measure in all things.”

“It is not only the supernatural which falls under the criticism of the new German school: M. Feuerbach, and all the philosophers of that school, acknowledge that theism, natural religion, and all rationalism that admits anything transcendent, should be put on the same footing with supernaturalism. Belief in God and the immortality of the soul is as superstitious as to believe in the Trinity and in miracles. . . . All considerations of a superior world, every thought a man has beyond himself, every religious feeling, under whatever form it may manifest itself, is but an illusion.”¹⁰

To crown this frightful system of impiety, Feuerbach terminates his *Tranathalogie* in declaring that he would prefer total annihilation to meeting St. Augustine and other heroes in the sphere of the shades of Socrates; and then, as a conclusion to all his philosophy, he invites his disciples to *adore death!*

It would be easy to increase these quotations, but those already given are sufficient to show the disastrous influence always at work, as the result of pagan philosophy, and therefore, the absolute necessity of returning without delay to Christian philosophy, if we would avert another, and perhaps a last, catastrophe.

¹⁰ *Liberté de Penser*, Nov. 20, 1850.

CHAPTER XVII.

INFLUENCE OF PAGAN CLASSICS ON THE SCIENCES.

UNCERTAINTY, darkness, materialism, monstrous errors, an intellectual chaos; these are what modern philosophy has gained in becoming the pupil of paganism, in spite of the positive prohibition of the Fathers of the Church, and the eloquent reserve of the ages of faith. Now, philosophy is the culture, *par excellence*, of the idea, and the idea governs the world. Philosophy, therefore, exercises an inevitable influence on science in general, on the arts, on literature, on all the manifestations of thought. In becoming pagan, it must of necessity imprint its different characters on all these things. Abundant facts render the truth of this induction palpable. Let us commence with history.

The first characteristic of modern philosophy, the daughter of pagan philosophy, is uncertainty. The innumerable systems she has given birth to, and still brings forth, are a proof of this; she has communicated this characteristic to history. History is the science of facts, of their causes, their relation to each other, their individual object, and their tendency to a general and superior object. Now, these historical facts, are due to a double cause, — the action of God and the liberty of man; as they are co-ordained for a double object, — the glory of God and the salvation of man.

Hence, we have a double element in history, — the divine and the human. The knowledge of this double element, and of its combined action on the facts which make up the annals of the world, is the philosophy, or the eye of history. It is evident that this philosophy depends upon the idea that serves as a point of departure. If this idea does not exist, history will be but a monotonous registration of dates and names; if this idea be false, history becomes a lie and a reverie; if it be true, then history becomes a delightful study, and the source of the most precious knowledge.

But who can communicate this idea to man? None other than He who can reveal humanity to itself, its origin, its duties, and its destiny. That is, it belongs to God alone, and to religion, to communicate to us the true philosophy of history. Now, in becoming pagan, history ceased to seek its polar star in religion; it would blush, like the philosopher himself, to ask enlightenment from that which was constantly represented as the mother of ignorance, the queen of barbarism. Nay more, not only did history quit abruptly the school of faith, but she prevented the possibility of returning to it in declaring against the Church on all occasions and in every way. To such a point was this carried, that, according to the Count de Maistre, since the "*Renaissance*," *history is one continuous conspiracy against truth*.

Hence, it comes that we have no more philosophy of history; each historian arrogates to himself the privilege of writing under the inspirations of his own opinions, prejudices, antipathies, or sympathies. Hence, the truly *philosophical* confusion we find in the appreciation of the most ordinary facts; hence, the scandalous rehabilitations of the worst of criminals; hence, in fine, the still more scandalous condemnations of the most distinguished men, the most noble actions. Deprived of its majesty, history has but too often been made a mere go-cart, in which to place some preconceived system, some favorite thesis, or some secret interest of sect or party. In the simple relation of facts, history shows itself the faithful echo of paganism. It speaks seriously of the state of nature, of a time when man lived scattered in the forest, and supported himself on wild fruits and herbs; when a few signs served for him to express the simple wants of his material life. What idea does this give us of the dignity of man and the bounty of God? What an excellent means of confirming our faith in the Mosaic account, which may be considered as the basis of all history.

It is not enough to destroy; on these absurd premises are founded systems highly hostile to religion and social order. They maintain, for example, that God has not revealed himself to man; that religion and society are the work of man and of time. Not only does this philosophy of history imitate paganism, but, like a dutiful child, it defends its parent. It pretends that history has calumniated Nero, Decius, Diocletian, and other persecutors; it accuses the victims of the crimes of their murderers; it charges Christianity, which it calls fanaticism, with a great part of the excesses from which it has suffered; it accuses the sovereign pontiffs, those even who saved Europe from barbarism, with ambition and cruelty. In many respects the Church is not worthy of the confidence, the respect, nor the gratitude of nations: such are the conclusions of this philosophical history.

To this character of uncertainty and skepticism must be added that of materialism. The clearness of perception, found in the works of the Fathers of the Church, particularly in those of St. Augustine; the linking together of events, so as to explain a whole epoch, disappears with the spirit that inspired it. Since the *Renaissance*, none but Bossuet has been able to raise himself to the superior cause of events, to that Supreme Director, who holds in his hands the reins of all empires, who raises or lowers them at will, and who directs the world whilst men act. Livy, Sallust, Tacitus, Xenophon, Herodotus have become models of necessity; and from this results an absolute silence on the action of Providence in the events of this world.

The divine element systematically rejected, history has become, under the *Christian* pen, what it was under that of the pagans, — a dead letter. The annals of the human race, open to all eyes, have ceased to communicate to man the knowledge of God and of himself, his mission, and his condition on Earth. What are the results of this return to paganism? Degradation for history; materialism and fatalism for man.

The other sciences have not been more fortunate. Hostility to religion, and the development of materialism, are the advantages they have acquired in becoming pagan. It would be superfluous to verify this by long details; we will content ourselves with some general remarks.

Who amongst us has not heard the sarcasms that have been raised in all quarters, for the last three hundred years, against the religion of the Middle Ages? Mingled with sophistry, these sarcasms form an immense mountain, raised against Heaven by the modern Titans. And still, from the height of this mountain, most of the *savants* and masters of youth still speak. Hence it is that descends that cordial hatred to Catholicism, or what is still worse, that contempt, more insulting than hate. Hence it is, we have that opinion, which is still listened to, that faith can only be opposed to reason; yet those who speak thus, have never asked of religion the solution of any problem, and never pronounce her name in the demonstration of any scientific theories.

And what has science gained by this pagan hostility? Deprived of faith, which alone could reveal the secrets of the moral world, the human mind is unequal to sciences of a superior order: to science in its relations with God; to science in its relation with man, as well in the civil as in the domestic order. Who does not blush at seeing the frightful ignorance into which Europe has fallen with regard to all things truly worthy of man? What serious solution has she given, during the last three centuries, to all the great problems, upon which depend the peace of nations and the solid progress of the human race? Is it not pitiable to see the most simple questions of religion, of religious, civil, and

domestic liberty, and of Christian patriotism, which were elementary in the ages of faith, surpassing our intellectual capacities, and puzzling our modern Lycurguses?

To bring the most noble and most necessary sciences into discredit is the first fruit of pagan classics. The profanation of these same sciences is the second result. Formerly, the power of the Christian mind was such that it, as it were, spiritualized the material sciences in turning them to the advantage of religion. This has been noticed in speaking of the famous schools of England and Ireland; we see it also in the hierarchical order, indicated by St. Thomas, and generally followed in Europe before the time of the *Renaissance*. In the present day, such is the power of the pagan spirit, that it makes the moral sciences serve to the support of materialism, and the propagation of its reign.

What, for instance, can be more moral in its essence and object than the government of nations? Let us now examine what has passed in Europe during the last three centuries. Has not legislation despoiled itself of its religious character? Has not the science of law entirely ceased to place its foundations on primordial rights, on the will of God, manifested in the Scriptures, and the decisions of the Church? What resemblance is there between modern charters and the capitularies of our ancient kings, or the constitutions of the Christian emperors? Are not politics reduced to the art of materializing the people? Do they not proclaim, in concert with their modern companion, the science of economy, that a people has nothing to desire when it has bread to eat and wine to drink; a bed for repose; theaters for diversion, railways for transport; machinery to provide clothing at a cheap rate, and gas to see by? Is it not to procure these advantages that the efforts and calculations of the modern politician exclusively tend? If he teaches morality to the population, is it not in the interest of material order, and to secure the tranquillity of his pleasures? The law-makers of our days may congratulate themselves upon their success: under the influence of these pagan politics, Christian people have arrived at the belief that man lives by bread alone; that every science that does not furnish material enjoyment is a chimera; that all teaching that does not bring honor and profit is a deception; that happiness is a thing entirely of this life; and this is all he asks, all he seeks, all he combats for!

CHAPTER XVIII.
CONTINUATION.

IF we consider the physical and natural, it is more particularly in them that we shall perceive the frightful influence of pagan classics.

The universe is a magnificent mirror, in which are reflected, under a thousand different aspects, the perfections of God, which escape the human eye. The firmament, with its innumerable suns, and the Earth, with its infinite riches, are two eloquent preachers, whose voice, intelligible to all, incessantly announces the glory of the Creator. In the heavens, as in the grain of sand, God has graven in sparkling characters the proof of His existence, His power, His wisdom, and His bounty. Thus it was that, surveying the creation he had just drawn from nothing, the Supreme Workman *pronounced all to be good*. Thus it was, too, that the Sages of the East said: — *the universe is a Lyre, of which God is the musician*.

Who dare deny that the true end of the physical sciences is to seek in nature what the divine eye sees therein, and to make use of what is discovered as a stepping-stone, whereby man may raise himself to a more perfect knowledge and a more faithful love of the Creator? Or, to speak as the Indian theosophist, who dare deny that the felicity of man ought to be initiated in the divine secrets of this mysterious harmony? And is not man, in a certain sense, the god, and consequently the musician, of the universe? Ought not, therefore, the harmonious chords of this lyre, tuned by the Creator, to vibrate under the hand of the learned?

To seek the spiritual in the material world is the object to be kept in view in reading the great book of nature; material good is but a secondary object. The order of Providence consists in harmonizing this double end; disorder consists in forgetting the first, to take account only of the second: this is materialism; this is the profanation of science, for it is the enthrallment of nature to the iniquity and the degradation of the intelligence.

Docile to the voice of the Creator himself, the Fathers of the Church and the ages of faith thus understood the study of nature and the

prophets. Nothing can be compared to the sublime lessons of Job and Isaiah; to the immortal treatises of St. Basil, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory of Nazianzen, St. Chrysostom, and of St. Augustine, on the work of the six days. Beside the superior end of science which they fully attained, they gave to the most difficult problems solutions which modern science has been obliged to admit.

“The greatest use,” say they, “that can be drawn from the study of nature, is an incitement to piety. There are no better subjects for reflection than the phenomena of nature, when they are attributed to an intelligent author . . . It is to consider the universe as a temple, where we remain in permanent adoration. Instead of thinking rarely of God, as with those who have not this custom, it becomes almost impossible not to identify the idea of God with all the objects that strike our attention. There is not a single organized body, which, in its means of preservation and reproduction, does not display the particular care of the Creator. It is the same intelligence that has ordained all, and interests Himself in all created beings. It is under the law of this Being that we live; our existence, our happiness are in his hands, and all we have to hope is from Him. In the immense picture which nature offers us, we see that nothing has been neglected, and that the same degree of attention and care has been bestowed on the smallest object. How can it enter our minds that we ourselves shall ever be forgotten or neglected?”¹

Cuvier, in treating on a science long abused by paganism, shows the object to which it must be directed. He establishes that geology proves the annals of the Earth to be in accordance with those of man, and confirms, in a wonderful manner, the account given by Moses. “It is,” says he, “one of the results the best proved and the *least expected* of this science, a result so much the more precious, as connecting by an uninterrupted chain, natural and civil history. I think, then, with Deluc and Dolomieu, that if there is anything certain in geology, it is that the surface of our globe has been the victim of a great and sudden revolution, the date of which cannot go back much beyond five or six thousand years; that this revolution swept away the country formerly inhabited by men, and the species of animals common to our times; that it dried up the former seas, and formed of the surface covered by them, the countries we inhabit at present; that it is since this time that the few persons who were then spared have become propagated on the new-dried lands, and consequently that it is from this period that our

¹ Linnæus, *Essais, etc.*

present societies took their origin, formed establishments, collected facts, and combined scientific systems.”²

To make nature serve to the glory of its Author, and to the spiritual good of man, without excluding any of the material results of investigation; such is order, such is, under the inspiration of Christianity, the magnificent mission of science. But what shall we say of the unworthy part to which modern paganism has condemned it? It is written, that the Philistines, after having taken Samson, cut off his hair, put out his eyes, and condemned him to turn a mill for their diversion, till the strong one of Israel buried them under the ruins of a temple converted into a theater. And this is exactly what paganism has done for the physical sciences. It has taken possession of them, despoiled them of the strength and light with which they are endowed, in order that they might bear witness of the Creator; it has tortured them in every way, to extort blasphemies from them; it has forbidden them ever to pronounce the name of God, instead of which that of nature is put into their mouth. Nature has done all we see; nature has given instinct to creatures; nature has imposed immobility on some of her creatures: we find the word nature everywhere, without any explanation as to who she is. After having degraded creatures, it has constrained them, by long and persevering efforts, to reveal their secrets, to display their treasures, and it has made use of both to procure a brutish enjoyment. Society is intoxicated with this, and totters on its base, awaiting a tomb in this orgy without name, where atheism, extorted from the creation, unites itself to incredulity of mind and sensualism of heart.

To degrade nature, to condemn it to silence with respect to religion, and to bring the world back to the sybaritism of the age of Tiberius, is what classic paganism has done for the physical sciences. And this is not all; for, instead of leaving them a Christian language whereby to explain themselves, it has composed an unintelligible jargon of no particular country, but which bears the double stamp of Greek and Latin paganism. Why do we not protest, in the name of good sense, as in the name of science itself, against the barbarous terminology introduced by the Renaissance into our scientific language? We will do so through the medium of a man who must be free from all suspicion. “Doubtless, science cannot restrict itself to the common language; it is obliged to have recourse to expressions peculiar to itself. These words require to be defined, that is, explained by others more simple; and the sole rule for these definitions is, not to introduce any term which

² *Disc. sur les Revol. etc.*

requires explanation, that is to say, that is not clear in itself, or that has been explained already.

“Scientific terms are only invented from necessity; therefore, it is clear, a science should not be charged with them by hazard. It is to be desired, then, that these scientific, or to speak more correctly, these barbarous terms, may be abolished; in geometry, for instance, let us simply say proposition, instead of theorem; consequence, instead of corollary; remark, instead of scholia; and so with the rest. Most of our scientific terms are taken from the learned languages, in which they were intelligible even to the people, because they were often common expressions, or derived from such. And why not preserve them this advantage? New, useless, or fanciful words, or those that are derived from an origin too obscure, are almost as ridiculous in science as in taste. The language of each science cannot be rendered too simple, too popular; not only is it a means of facilitating study, but also of removing that prejudice so common to those who pretend that these terms make all the merit, and are placed as a barrier to defend its approaches.”³

And perhaps the people are not altogether wrong. However this may be, so long as the sciences speak the vernacular tongue in Greek and Latin, or rather, in a barbarous idiom, made up of a fanciful mixture of two dead languages, they will never become popular. The most graceful of all, botany, will remain stifled under the weight of its unintelligible nomenclature. This is a new advantage we owe to our fanatic admiration of paganism.

There is yet another. In becoming pagan, the sciences have become altogether material, or as is more commonly said, altogether positive. Their glory consists in studying matter, — nothing but matter; they multiply observations and experiments, and have accumulated numerous facts. But are these facts alone science? By no means; any more than the body without the soul is man; any more than materials scattered pell-mell are an edifice; any more than colors, however rich they may be, thrown upon canvas, are a picture. What is wanting to the sciences is life, is the thought to animate, to harmonize all the parts; and this is wanting to science, because faith is wanting to reason. In a word, so long as the sciences, become pagan with the *Renaissance*, do not return frankly to Christianity, they will only be like the blind man who traverses unknown regions without a guide, or one condemned laboriously to dig stone from the bowels of the Earth for a building which he can never raise: creating genius is the son of faith.

³ D’Alembert, *Encyclop.* art. “Eléments.”

From this absence of faith arises that inability for general views, that *narrowness*, that kind of individualism, which stamps with its fatal mark all the present labors of intelligence. Divisions and subdivisions, which may be considered as a real epidemic of science, have invaded every form of human knowledge. Hence, the most distinguished are led to make this remarkable avowal, that the sciences that are most in vogue at the present time have not made a single step in advance since the days of Aristotle. "Comparative physiology," says M. Bourdon, "has remained much about as we find it in the immortal works of Aristotle. By dint of distinguishing things almost to infinity, the *generalities which distinguish the sciences have become almost universally neglected*. With the exception of three or four naturalists, whose works are the glory of modern science, most of those who have turned their attention to natural history, have converted it into a science full of puerilities." ⁴ Buffon makes use of the same language. "Aristotle's *History of Animals*," says he, "is perhaps still the best we have of the kind . . . It appears, by his work, that he knew his subject better, and saw it under more general views, than those of the present time." ⁵ It would be easy to add other testimony to this, if such were necessary.

The physical sciences are, however, the bright side of the history, if reason becomes void of faith in becoming pagan. We do not wish to contest any real success they may boast of; but this success we boldly assert has been fatal to the real progress of the human mind, that is, to its advancement towards truth: truth is God, and they have withdrawn from God.

Not only have the physical sciences inclined towards matter, in presenting it as the only source of enjoyment and glory, but also in exaggerating the importance of the natural sciences, and all that relates to them. To see the innumerable works on physical, natural, geological, and mathematical science published during a century; to see the travels undertaken by sea and by land, the enormous expense gone to by individuals and by governments; to see the honors awarded to men who have realized some progress, the praises given to these sciences, and to the places occupied by them, one would suppose man was only created to know the properties of matter, that this was the most important of all things.

The advocates of the *Renaissance* have adorned, with the exclusive title of the *exact sciences*, mathematics, and have said, "Simple facts clearly seen and frankly avowed:" this is the starting-point necessary to

⁴ *Principes de Physiol. Comp.* p. 45.

⁵ *Manière d'Etudier l'Hist. Natur.* tom. i. pp. 43-44.

all the sciences. Sow geometry, and this fruitful seed will bring forth philosophers.”⁶ And in fact, when you have succeeded in establishing that there is nothing true but what can be touched by the hand, seen with the eye, or proved by A plus B, it is evident we shall have none but infidels and skeptics. All the truths that cannot be submitted to this kind of proof will not go beyond probability, and will cease to be, to the enlightened man, points of belief and obligatory rules of conduct. To create materialism in morals, and skepticism in religion, in history, and in philosophy, is the goal of the natural sciences become pagan. If this is progress, we incline before the *Renaissance*.

⁶ *Encyclop.* art. “Eléments et Géométrie.”

CHAPTER XIX.

INFLUENCE OF PAGAN CLASSICS ON RELIGION.

WHEN it is the object of an enemy to take possession of a strong place, he begins by occupying a favorable position, from whence he destroys the out-works which protect the heart of the fortress; and such are the tactics employed by paganism, which seeks to take revenge upon Christianity. Established on the most favorable ground, that of education, we have seen it batter literature, philosophy, the arts and sciences; then, under the pretext of regeneration, animate them with its spirit, enroll them under its banner, and march upon Christianity itself, which is the heart of the place, the true aim of all its attacks. To prove the progress of the enemy on this point, and to show that classic paganism tends to the entire ruin of Christianity, is the important matter we are about to enter upon.

Classic paganism ruins Christianity in causing it to be forgotten, to be contemned, to be altered. Let us examine things as they are. From the family, where, generally speaking, he has received but a superficial knowledge of Christianity, the child enters an establishment for public instruction, where he remains for seven or eight years. If not the first, at least the second Latin or Greek book put into his hands is pagan; the third is pagan, the fourth is pagan, and in fact, all are pagan to the end of his studies.

His daily and hourly occupation is to read, to translate, and to commit to memory all the doings of paganism, from the exploits of the gods to those of the warriors, the orators, and the philosophers. In the classes nothing is heard but the names of Romans and Carthaginians. To identify the students more completely with these models, the classes are divided into two camps, and the youth is either Greek or Roman — Scipio or Hannibal. The explanations of the professors never, or very rarely, furnish him with Christian notions. He lives in the midst of paganism; his horizon never, except by some unusual circumstance, extends beyond the limits of Greece and Italy. The Holy Mountain, the

Palatine, Sparta, Thebes, Marathon, the Thermopylæ, the Tribune, the Capitol, the Areopagus, the Forum, are the only places upon which his thoughts, his imagination, and his memory dwell.

But, it may be boasted, in the colleges, the seminaries, and in the houses directed by secular persons, as well as those under the management of religious and ecclesiastics, are there not almoners and masters who teach religion?

Religion, like the sciences, figures in the program of the studies; each college has a chaplain to say Mass and teach the Catechism, and this chaplain offers up the holy sacrifice twice a week, and gives his lesson as often, or perhaps more frequently; but, with all this appearance, is religion taught, is it even saved from indifference? By no means. Before explaining, however, we hasten to say that this is in no way the fault of the men, but of the system.

Imbued with deism, not to say worse, the present system of education only sees in religion an abstract science, confined within a limited and determined sphere, and not, as it should be (but as it never will be with the pagan classics), a universal science, the science of sciences, to be found daily and hourly in the course of study, imparting a sweetness to all. In fact, it is not in one book only, but in every book; not from the mouth of one master only, but from the lips of every master, religion should go out, in relating historical facts, the virtues of great men, or in explaining all the maxims of the Gospel; again, it should be used in forming the heart of the child, in correcting his young intelligence, in developing the germ of his noble disposition; or again, to reveal the hidden cause of a revolution, or an important event; and on all occasions to show him the true source of the beautiful, the good, the true; in a word, religion should be the soul, the eye, the rule, the perfume of all the sciences, which it is calculated to vivify, to ennoble, to explain, and to conduct to the great end of all things, — to the glory of God and the salvation of men.

Is it possible not to see in this the radical evil which casts and always will cast religion in the shade in our pagan system of education? The Catechism of the almoner will change nothing. His lessons will be listened to like the others, perhaps with a little less attention and a little more repugnance. In the eyes of the child, religion will continue to be an abstract science, disconnected from the other studies, and one that he is at liberty to apply or to forget, with only the merit or demerit of being more or less instructed. He will know religion as he knows a foreign language, upon which he receives one or two lessons a week, without being able to read a work or maintain a conversation after five years' study. The evident proof of what is here advanced is to be found

in the fact that the university generations, and the classes of society upon which they act, are not so well informed on religious matters as the lower classes, or the opposite sex.

In any case, the teaching of religion for some hours in the course of the week, in concurrence with daily and hourly pagan teaching, will never form solidly religious generations. What, writes Father Possevin, will a few drops of pure wine do towards sweetening a tun of vinegar? ¹ Besides the experience of Europe during the last three centuries, we will cite the opinion of one who must be free from all suspicion: — “Let us not deceive ourselves,” says Mr. Keratry; “it is not the presence of an ecclesiastic, however worthy he may be, at certain fixed times, that will inculcate a lasting religious feeling in the children. *This can only result from a continuous teaching, in which the divine law is infused. Studies, though they be purely literary, should be impregnated with this.* What will occur if the dogmas of religion ever become objects of doubt? The youths will require incontestable truths in matters of religion; for them, controversial faith soon becomes a dead faith.”

These observations with respect to establishments under the direction of secular persons, we regret to say, apply also, with some restrictions, to those in the hands of religious orders, or of ecclesiastics. Here, again, religion is not emitted naturally and directly, as the perfume of a flower, from the books, the duties, and the habitual studies of the child, nor from the explanations of the professor. It is sometimes produced indirectly, painfully, as it were, by contrast; but this is all that a pious and able master can do under the pagan system. Hence results that fatal inversion where paganism forms the banquet, of which Christianity is but the dessert; a certain degree of pagan knowledge is acquired, but there remains a profound ignorance of Christianity.

In giving our full tribute of praise to the zeal and virtue of our masters, we cannot help protesting loudly against the pagan system, under which our childhood was formed, and the ignorance in matters of religion that was the result of it. On leaving college, we knew by heart the names, the history, the attributes, the adventures of the gods and goddesses of fable; we knew the Danaïdes, and the Parcæ, Ixion and his wheel, Tantalus with his torment, the feathered tribe of the Capitol and of Claudius. Without a single mistake, we could have given the biography of Minos, of Æacus, of Rhadamanthus, of Codrus and of

¹ Quanto vi pare che quadri che in una botte sincera s' infonda un bicchier di vino dolce, puro, defecato, cioè un poco di catechismo la settimana, e ad un tempo vi si versino dentro i barili interi d' aceto, di liquore di muffa, ed ogni altra sorte di vino putrido? Cioè ogni giorno i Terenzj e l' altre impietà! Tale è oggi il costume del mondo. — *Ragion*, p. 2.

Tarquin, of Epaminondas, of Scipio and of Hannibal, of Cicero and of Demosthenes, without counting that of Alexander and of Cæsar, of Ovid, of Sallust, of Virgil, and of Homer. Lycurgus, Socrates, Plato, the Flamens, the Circus and the Amphitheater, the sacrifices, the feasts, all were familiar to us. In a word, we knew all that was desirable in young men of distinction in Rome and Athens, the offshoots of Brutus and of Gracchus, candidates for the glories of the Forum, adorers, or future priests, of Jupiter and of Saturn.

But if we had been transported into the arena of Christianity, and called upon to name the twelve Apostles, or the numbers of the Epistles; if we had been interrogated on our saints and martyrs, on our heroes and our glories, our Chrysostoms, our Augustines, our Athanasiuses, and our Ambroses, on these kings of Christian eloquence and philosophy, these fathers of the modern world, these masters of the science of life; if we, their children, and the children of the Church and of the martyrs, had been asked the date of their birth, what were the combats they sustained, the works they composed, the actions that commanded the admiration, the veneration of future ages, it would have been as an unknown tongue to us. The blush on our cheek and the silence of our lips would have excited the pity of a man of sense, and convinced us of the nakedness of our classical studies. Such is our history, as it is doubtless that of many others.

Will it be said that this deplorable ignorance on matters of religion is to be dissipated later? Alas, how many young people, men of a ripe age, in the various conditions of life, do we know, who, from the time they left college, have devoted *twenty-four hours* to the study of religion? How many, on the contrary, may we not cite, who, so far from developing what little they knew of religion, have long, long since lost even the elementary notions of the Catechism? Thus we have shown that classic paganism condemns the immense majority of *instructed* men to an eternal ignorance in matters of religion.

CHAPTER XX.
CONTINUATION.

THE first effect of paganism in education is to consign religion to oblivion; the second, to hold it up to contempt.

Let us not forget what has been said, that religion is the universal science, the alpha and omega of all things. The words St. Thomas makes use of in speaking of theology apply literally to her: "The science of religion," says he, "commands all other sciences, because it is the most elevated of all; it makes them labor under its orders, holding them in its service, because it is charged with the direction of all." ¹

It follows that religion can have no superior, and ought to have no rival; that its inspirations, its combats, its triumphs, its men, its glories, are above all comparison. A princely part is alone suited to it: any other is derogatory. It is queen, or nothing at all: *aut nihil, aut Cæsar*. Now, to place paganism and Christianity, as regards literature, the arts, history, the sciences and philosophy, in the same category, is to divide the empire of ideas between them, and to make them equal, in the esteem of the young. To put paganism first is to give it the scepter and the place of honor in the eyes of youth; it is to degrade Christianity, and to annihilate it as much as this is possible for the rising generations, whose first impressions constitute the moral being till death. These points being established, we will enter into any college in Europe, no matter which, and we shall hear the professor thus address his young auditory: — "My friends, there were two privileged countries in antiquity, where genius and eloquence, poetry and history, philosophy and architecture, sculpture and, in fine, all the arts and sciences, long fixed their abode. In these countries were born the greatest men the world has ever known. Rome and Athens were the countries of the most celebrated heroes; Greece and Italy are the double theater of deeds the most memorable and the most worthy of your study.

"To cite only a few names: Homer, Sophocles, Pindar, Xenophon, Thucydides, Æsop, Demosthenes, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle,

¹Theologia imperat omnibus allis scientiis tanquam *principalis, etc.*

Epaminondas, Alexander, Virgil, Horace, Titus Livius, Ovid, Suetonius, Sallust, Cicero, Seneca, Pliny, Scipio, Fabius, Marius, Cæsar, Pompey, Augustus, and a crowd of others, are the kings of genius, of science, of valor, and of glory. Before them, all other men who preceded or have followed them fade away. Their works and their deeds are before you: you will have the happiness of studying the one, and will make it a duty to imitate the other. Learn to think, to feel, and to speak like them, if you wish to think, to feel, and to speak well. I have only to warn you, that these men were not Christians; but this takes nothing either from their masterpieces, or from their noble actions.”

The wondering youths believe and admire; on the word of their master, they disdain all that is not of pagan origin in literature, in the arts and sciences. Such is the way in which paganism is applied in education to the impressionable soul of the child. And this is daily repeated for seven years! And these seven years are those during which the man is formed! What must inevitably be the effect of such a system upon religion? Listen to the reply of a pious bishop: —

“We judge no one, and still less do we condemn them; we tremble at the wanderings of the human mind, and we easily believe that, had we lived a century earlier, we should have participated in the errors we deplore. But we would, gentlemen, point out to you what passed then, and, alas! what is still the case almost everywhere.

“For near three hundred years it has been said to the young students, that is, to those who have been called upon later to govern society: ‘Form your taste upon good models; now the good models are exclusively the pagan authors of Rome and Athens. As to the Fathers, the doctors, and all the writers of the Church, their style is defective and their taste bad; you must therefore be careful not to form yourself in their school.’ — This is what has been said to the young students, and what is worse, this is what they have been made to practice at an age when, it is literally true, custom becomes a second nature.

“And what is the result of this? What it must necessarily be: the youths become impassioned with a love for the study of pagan productions, and the admiration of words is followed by that of thoughts and actions.

“They bow before the seven sages of Greece with almost as much respect as before the four Evangelists; are in raptures at the thoughts of Marcus Aurelius, or the philosophical works of Seneca, as if there was nothing so profound in the holy books; and vaunt the virtues of Sparta and Rome, so as to eclipse the Christian virtues.

“Is not such teaching calculated in the end to diminish faith and excite the pride of reason? Will it be rash to say, that in thus placing the

works of man in relief, to the great prejudice of revelation, which is the work, *par excellence*, of God, they prepare the way for the reign of rationalism, which has arrived at a point not to adore anything but itself?"²

Lest this reply should not be sufficient, we will suppose that, in the primitive days of the Church, the pagans, only listening to a pretended zeal for literature, the sciences and the arts, had taken our Christian books for the basis of their children's instruction; that they had paid thousands of the most able masters during the space of seven years, daily to excite their enthusiasm for our apostles, our martyrs, our orators, our historians, our philosophers, calling them the kings of eloquence and of genius, and impressing on them that nothing in paganism could be compared to them, that our institutions and laws were the masterpieces of wisdom and equity; would not every one have said, and with reason, that the pagans had lost their senses, that they demolished their altars and temples with their own hands; that the Christian spirit would necessarily penetrate literature, philosophy, sciences, the arts, — in a word, society altogether; that, being admirers of Christian men and things, their children would infallibly treat pagan things with contempt; that they would, sooner or later, embrace the religion of genius, and abandon that which had only produced mediocrity?

If, later, the pagans had expressed surprise at the contempt shown by their children for the worship of their fathers, and at their preference for that of the Christians, what would you have thought of their astonishment? Yet this is exactly our history.

For three centuries paganism has been the principal ingredient in education, and therefore it is not surprising that it imparts its color to our ideas and morals. You lament bitterly to see religion abandoned and contemned, and in it to see the last barrier that opposed the threatening torrent swept away, the last column of human liberty destroyed, your last landmark removed; but if your regret is sincere, lend us your aid in changing the system; for if we would remedy the effect, we must attack the cause.

Contempt for religion, which is the inevitable consequence of the pagan classics, does not wait for the age of manhood to develop itself. It displays itself in the college by a total abstinence of piety, a disgust for Christian duties and religious instruction, by incredulity and corruption, the double leper, that devours even to the quick the generations nourished on pagan milk. It manifests itself more

² Letter of the bishop of Langres to the superiors and directors of his little seminary.

particularly in the conduct of the masters and students towards the man in whom religion is personified. In their eyes the chaplain, whatever may be his virtues and talents, is but a necessary appendage. He whose lessons ought to excite the most zeal, whose word command the most respect and love, is looked upon by some as a mercenary, who instructs at so much per day, and by others as a *professor of religion*, an *officer of morals*, who gives lessons at certain fixed times; one who endeavors to produce in the soul, not faith in the truths of religion, but a dry and sterile conviction, something like that of a professor of algebra, in demonstrating his problems.

Classic paganism not only condemns religion to oblivion and contempt, but has a still more disastrous effect, — it leads to alteration in it.

What is Christianity? It is the religion of spirit, of eternity, detachment from the riches of the world, its honors and pleasures, self-abnegation and mortification of the flesh, in order to render to the soul its legitimate empire: this is what Christianity has preached from the manger to Calvary, from the cradle to the tomb, from the first to the last page of the Gospel. Blessed are the humble, blessed are the poor, blessed are those who suffer; woe to the rich, the powerful, the happy of this world: such are its maxims.

Again, what is Christianity? It is a supernatural religion, and rejects as insufficient all human motives, all purely natural intentions, and consequently, all virtues that are not inspired by the order of grace. Display not your good works before man, or you will receive no recompense from your Father, who is in Heaven. Remain united in the bonds of charity to your divine Mediator, as the branch of the vine is united to the stem from which it receives support and nourishment, otherwise your merits will be null, you will be barren trees, useless servants, and will be cast bound into outer darkness. Purity of intention and the grace of sanctification are the two conditions indispensable to true Christian virtue.

What, in fine, is Christianity? It is the religion of charity, consequently of true liberty and equality amongst all men; it is the religion of affectionate devotedness of the rich to the poor, and of the poor to the rich; it is the religious respect of man for man, and above all, for the weak, for the child, the woman, the poor, the sick, the prisoner, the servant. Love your neighbor as yourself — They will know that you are my disciples if you love one another, not only by word of mouth, but in truth and in deed. Such is the spirit of Christianity.

And now let us examine what is paganism! Paganism is the antipode of Christianity. The love of riches, of honors, of pleasure. It is the

religion of the senses, the religion of time, the adoration of matter. Blessed are the rich, blessed are the powerful, blessed are those who bask in the lap of pleasure: this is the voice of paganism, this is what it loves, this is what it extols in its men, its gods, by the voice of its historians, its poets, its orators, its artists, and in all that it offers for the imitation of our children.

Again, what is paganism? It is naturalism in virtue. Virtues inspired by human views, by the desire of making a name, by humor, character, temperament; virtues without the sanctifying graces, which alone can make them useful for eternity; virtues of parade, which are carefully economized in secret. Hence come those historians, orators, moralists, those Sallusts, Senecas, Ciceros, who speak eloquently of temperance, and declaim against ambition and immorality, and who in the secret of their hearts outrage modesty, temperance, and all the virtues.

What, in fine, is paganism? It is the religion of universal hatred, the religion of slavery and contempt of humanity, which it tramples underfoot, or makes the instrument of its most brutal pleasures; it permits the child to be sold, exposed, or even killed; it holds the woman in the most complete bondage; it pursues the poor with its contempt, as an unclean animal; it abandons the sick, on their bed of anguish, to the imaginary care of Æsculapius; it strangles the prisoner, and, in fine, it takes less heed of the slave than of the dog that amuses its master, or the beast that carries his burthen. This is paganism, as seen in its maxims, its spirit, and its acts.

In a word, Christianity is the glorification of the spirit; paganism, of the flesh: spiritualism is on one hand, paganism on the other. Thus the two religions are diametrically opposed to each other.

It is paganism that instructs our children, adopting all forms and colors, and insinuating itself everywhere; its perfume is exhaled from every book, every page, every phrase, that the child is obliged to read, to study, to learn by heart, — in a word, to make part of himself; and this daily and hourly for seven years!

Under such an influence, what must become of Christianity? Alas! it is changed, it is weakened, it is extinguished. The supernatural order disappears, the natural alone remains. Man becomes what education makes him; he becomes flesh, he becomes pagan. Look around: do not sensualism and egotism inundate Europe? Do they not penetrate more or less every soul, every art, every science, every life, from beginning to end? Listen to one whose words cannot be suspected.

“The education of the youth of the middle classes is an ungrateful task. Theirs is an exhausted, an arid, a sterile soil, in which nothing flourishes but self-interest. I know these children of the *bourgeoisie*;

youth is upon their visage, but not in their heart. Their speculations begin even at college. What they seek the least is the true and the noble; they are but little sensible to the charms of literature and the sciences. Their future ambition is concentrated in the acquisition of a university grade, which opens to them what is denominated a *career*; their most distant ambition does not reach beyond the study necessary for a notary or an attorney; all they see is material well-being; a good table, a good coat, a good bed, and so forth. Their dominant virtue is that of the aged — prudence. Glory is for them but vain smoke, which the simple alone seek after; merit is a luxury not worth the efforts it demands, and none but fools would sacrifice a pleasure for it.

“If by chance they occupy themselves with politics, they are conservative under a monarchy, and reactionary under a republic. They belong to the great party of order; they consider that religion is necessary for the people, although they themselves believe in nothing; they defend the family in general, at the same time they afflict their own by their idleness, and ruin it later by their prodigality; they defend property, and love it too, but without labor.

“There are exceptions to this, I know; but they only excite laughter around them. In the highest school of the university, in the normal school, fifteen years ago, philosophy was the object of every one’s ambition; it is now held in disdain, and with difficulty are recruits found. Whence comes this? Formerly it was more certain and more lucrative than any other; at present it is perilous and persecuted. But on this account, my young comrades, it ought to command your preference.”³

This portrait is faithful and striking.

Quitting the college, let us enter into society. Where do we now find the Christian spirit of sacrifice and devotedness? Where is the solemn contempt of riches and honors? At what epoch did the three great concupiscences reign more despotically? Is not gold the god of the age? Is not pleasure the sole paradise which is sighed after? Is not the pagan dogma of pleasure here below, through the medium of riches, become the base of savage theories, which are held in high favor? Is not the world filled with writers, and orators, and authors of all kinds, who, following the example of their classic models, are eloquent upon virtues in which their conduct proves they do not believe? In fine, as a last point of resemblance, do we not see a society springing up around us, proclaiming, as did the pagans, that it is sufficient to be an honest man, and that it is possible to be virtuous without Christianity?

³ M. Jacques, Professor of Philosophy at Paris.

Let us now seek the epoch, since which Europe has so frightfully fallen away from the spirit of Christianity. Let us bear in mind that all comes from education, and we shall most certainly point out the *Renaissance* of pagan classics as the fatal epoch.

Let it not be said, in extenuation of this fact, that the pagan classics have been corrected and purified, or, to oppose the reform we seek, that they may still be corrected and purged anew: these are vain pretensions. Corrections, expurgations, suppressions, may do away with the grossest immoralities and the most palpable errors, but they will not change the pagan spirit which pagan works necessarily breathe.⁴ Yet the danger lies here, and this the Fathers of the Church and the Middle Ages thoroughly understood. When the St. Jeromes, the St. Augustines, and the Gregories, proscribed so determinedly the pagan classics, when they so eloquently pointed out the dangers they contained, we cannot suppose they were inspired by a fear of seeing the Christian world return to the worship of Jupiter, of Venus, or of Mercury? No; the gods of Olympus had fallen from their altars, never again to return to them. Paganism in its material form was dead; but its spirit still lived; and this spirit was preserved in the pagan books placed in the hands of youth, and was all-powerful to infuse itself into Christian generations, and thus into society at large. Here was, and still continues, the great danger, and here will it always remain.

Let us beware: the moment will come, if it is not already arrived, when it will be impossible to allay this spirit. "Upon the question of paganism or Christianity in education depends the safety of the world."⁵ This is what a man of great foresight declared in the face of Europe, in the sixteenth century. Fifteen years ago, a man renowned for

⁴ There is still a great deal left that shocks even men of our epoch. A month has scarcely elapsed since we read the following in the public journals. *Le Messager de l'Assemblée* of the 24th March, 1851, cites some lines from Euripides, which we abstain from reproducing, and adds: "This is what is commented on in rhetoric, and explained word for word. This appears to have suited the Greeks, since they adored Euripides, since it was sufficient for the conquered Athenians to recite a single verse in order to purchase their lives; but does it suit our times?"

"The National Assembly recently quoted some speeches of the *Conciones*, which form a complete apprenticeship for revolt.

"We might cite all kinds of immoralities from these classic editions, of adultery, robbery, suicide, impiety, etc.

"Formerly they said, *Græcum est, non legitur*; but now it is changed to, *Græcum est, non reprehenditur*.

"We are assured that a commission is appointed by the minister of Public Instruction to revise these Lyceum books, and it is not without necessity." — 24th March, 1851.

⁵ . . . Punto dipenda la salute dell' universo. — P. Possev. *Ragion*. etc.

INFLUENCE ON RELIGION

his intelligence and foresight wrote these words: — “Another thirty years of paganism in education, and it will become the religion of Europe.”

CHAPTER XXI.

INFLUENCE OF PAGAN CLASSICS ON THE FAMILY.

RESPECT for paternal authority, indissolubility of marriage, the right of the parent over his children, such are the bases of the Christian family. Now, political society, like domestic society, depends upon the observance of the laws which constitute it. Hence arose the profound veneration of the Christian people for the teaching and the customs of their fathers during fifteen hundred years; hence the great care with which the religious observances of their forefathers were transmitted as a previous heritage. Thus it was with all the families of history; and thus it was with all the great nations who shine in the annals of the world.

This law of preservation is so natural, and, if we may use the term, so elementary, that the pagan nations knew it perfectly, and observed it faithfully. Rome, so often cited, always appealed to primitive manners and customs. The maxims of her fathers were considered as sacred, and the veneration in which they held the names of their founders went almost to apotheosis. In this deep and universal respect, the family bond was always preserved, and this became the principle and the strength of Rome, the secret of its duration, and the basis of its sovereign power.

What is classic paganism now? It is the most powerful school of contempt of paternal authority that ever existed. In exposing the manner in which paganism is applied to the soul of youth, we are determined to act with great reserve. Rather than be accused of exaggeration, we prefer to remain within the bounds of truth; but the moment is come to speak without concealment. The praises of paganism are on one side of the medal, and contempt and derision of our forefathers on the reverse.

After having praised to the skies the men, the institutions, and all things else belonging to paganism, our ancestors, with all that they have said or done, are censured so as to make us blush to be descended from

such parentage. Nothing is spared; the first Christians are called fanatics and idiots; the Middle Ages are the iron ages for the human race, an epoch of universal lethargy. The faith of our ancestors is brutalizing; their religious ceremonies, superstition; their virtues, fanaticism; the popes, ambitious men; the kings, tyrants; the princes, robbers; and the lords, brigands: the laws of those ages are looked upon as cruel and senseless; their history, legend; their teaching, puerile; their literature, barbarism; their science, ignorance; their art, vandalism; their social state, slavery and misery. In a word, for more than three centuries, our ancestors have been represented as brigands, living by plunder and addicted to every vice; as savages, who scarcely knew how to walk on their feet; as idiots, whose simple credulity would allow of their admitting that asses could fly like swallows.

Then those who thus look upon the ages of faith, and all they produced, again trumpet forth the blessings of the *Renaissance*; they summon the young generations to give thanks to Heaven for having called them into existence, in the midst of light and liberty; and plunge, full of joy and gratitude, into that pagan antiquity, *which is*, according to M. Thiers, *all that there is most beautiful in the world*; into this calm, *peaceable, and healthy asylum, destined to preserve them fresh and pure*:¹ into this wonderful world, to which modern times owe their revival.²

If, in the midst of such diatribes, truth sometimes extorts a flattering word, the manner in which it is given makes it a new reproach. We will cite one of these, which we select out of a thousand. Arnaud writes: — “A singular observation has been made; it is, as it were, *in the midst of*

¹ Report sur la Loi d’ Instruct. *Secondaire*, 1844.

² “The history of the Middle Ages,” says the Abbé Millot, “is the opprobrium of human reason.” — *Histoire de France*, third Epoch. Unitariorum (Socinianorum) in Anglia historiam haud facile est ab initio investigare. Constat tamen mentem humanam, ex somno, quo per tenebras tot sæculorum sepulta fuerat, subito experrectam, studia sua huic veritati cito intendisse. — *Unitarior. brevis Exposit.* Lond. 1822. Quale spettacolo più curioso per questi tempi illuminati, urbani, operosi, il vedere da quai tenebre, da qual fierezza, da quale ignavia noi siam pervenuti sin qui, e il vedere per qual modo sieno state *sgombrate tante tenebre, e vinta tanta salvatichezza* . . . Un pensier nasce in mente dal considerare *l’infinità distanza*, che tra gli antichi tempi e i nostri si vede, il qual pensiero io non posso lasciare senza qualche riflessione, che della storia è propria più che nol sono i fatti degli antichi da mille dubietà e menzogne sempre inviluppati . . . Per quanto nel vero sia questo studio umiliante, al vedersi ogni gente ad un vivere pervenuta più ragionevole per mezzo ad *infinite brutalità* e divenuti alquanto umani dopo essere stati *peggio che fiere gli uomini tutti*, qual vantaggio non è, qual diletto riconoscere i mezzi e le cause onde ebbero origine i nuovi costumi! — Bettinelli, *Risorgimento d’ Italia negli Studj.* 1775, Introd. pp. xxxiii. xxxvii. Volumes of similar quotations might be given.

darkness, that grand things have sprung up, well calculated to attract our curiosity and fix our attention. Times the *most deeply buried in ignorance and barbarism* have produced, if we may say it, rays of light, such as these celebrated ages, which are pointed out to us as the most brilliant epochs of human reason, have not afforded. What sublime examples of valor, generosity, what greatness of soul, what heroic sacrifices do not the Ages of Chivalry present?"

Lest he should not be thoroughly understood, the author, in another place, says: "In the midst of darkness, etc. Surely we may call the seventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, the *dregs of ages*; and it was in these days of the *grossest barbarism* that so many noble actions, which still make the glory of the French nation, were performed." ³

Such is the education of youth, and it is you, fathers of families, who encourage it; it is you who applaud the masters, who daily, for seven years, outrage your authority in that of your ancestors; it is you who pay them for teaching your children what they in return practice on you, — the contempt of all that ought to be the most respected! Though all that the classic teaching relates of our forefathers should be true, is it the duty of children to expose the ignominy of the parents? Where have you ever seen that the sin of Cham produced happiness? But what if the accusations made against our ancestors should be abominable calumnies, or reproaches that we merit as much as they do, without taking into consideration the much more serious reproaches we deserve, but they have never merited?

We will not undertake in this place the apology of the Middle Ages: but when we see them daily exposed to all kinds of contempt; when the first lesson given to the youth of Europe is to teach it to blush for its ancestors, in order to exalt, by a false contrast, the pagan and the modern ages, proud children of paganism, truth cannot remain captive. Our fathers were more worthy than we are, and what we have of good we owe to them. Men like ourselves, they had defects, and are we exempt? We accuse them of credulity: is the skepticism, the atheism that devours us, a virtue? We stigmatize the rudeness of their manners, and the cruelty of their laws: are the profligacy, the impiety, the horrors that disgrace modern history, worthy of cannibals, or of civilized people?

We call their chivalrous virtues, their sublime devotedness, fanaticism and extravagance: what should we call our egotism? They built churches and religious houses — we build theaters and prisons. If

³ *Delassements de l'Homme Sensible; ou Anecdotes Diverses*, tom. i. part 2, p. 249; art. "Esprit de La Chevalrie."

they committed some crime, they publicly asked pardon of God and man — we glory in it. If they were threatened by, or were suffering from, the scourge of God, they humbled themselves — we blaspheme. When any great trouble came upon them, they prayed — in our days suicide is the remedy. We speak of their ignorance — where is our enlightenment? Is it in those days of darkness, or in these enlightened times, that the most just notions of right, of authority, of propriety, and of good and evil, are to be found?

We boast of the beauty of our modern languages — they created them. We have discovered steam and electricity — they discovered the compass, and invented printing and gunpowder. We have produced mountains of books — they the *Imitation of Christ*. We vaunt our glories in war and in the arts and sciences, — but were those ages as barbarous as we are pleased to say, which produced Charlemagne, Dugesclin, and Godfrey de Boulogne; Alcuin, St. Gregory VII., St. Louis and Suger; St. Bonaventura and St. Thomas; St. Bernard, St. Antony of Padua, and St. Vincent Ferrier; Dante and Petrarch; Gerbert and Roger Bacon? Were those savages, sons and brothers of savages, who raised to the clouds the spires of our cathedrals and peopled them with statues; who wrote the history of time and eternity in letters of gold, of purple and of azure, on the windows and walls of their magnificent edifices?

But it may be said they had not freedom of thought. This I know — we have impudence. They lived under oppression — we are ungovernable. They were clad in coarse cloth — we wear calico. They ate black bread — we eat potatoes. They lived in the midst of their families — we live in workshops and have no families.

It would be easy to prolong the parallels; what precedes is sufficient to make us somewhat modest, and to show the injustice of the proud contempt we are taught to entertain towards our ancestors and their works. Besides, we must not deceive ourselves; this contempt applies to a higher authority. Born enemy of Christianity, classic paganism shows itself hostile to the Middle Ages, because they were the Ages of Faith. They were the work of the Church, whose spirit deeply imbued the institutions, the manners and customs, the arts and sciences, and the language of this epoch. In crying them down, therefore, it is the Church that is attacked; in accusing them of superstition, ignorance, and barbarism, the accusations fall upon the Church. This is the effect of the stupid and inveterate war that the last three centuries have waged upon the Middle Ages. In this must be included so many men, well-intentioned in other respects, who have become fanatic admirers of pagan literature, and impassioned enemies of the great epoch of faith.

The innovators of the sixteenth century were not mistaken. None repeated so often, or so vehemently, that the ages during which the Catholic Church had exercised a sovereign influence over Europe were ages of the grossest ignorance, most profound degradation, most shameful superstition. After this, it only remained for them to say that if night had covered the Earth, it was because the sun had been eclipsed; that the Church had lost a part of her primitive truth; that her doctrine must be separated from the impure alloy that had been mixed with it; that all traditions must be rejected, and the world must return to the pure word of God: and this step was made.

In the suite of the apostles of classic paganism, we see Luther, Calvin, and Beza; and after the heresiarchs and innovators, come Bayle, D'Argens, Bolingbroke, Diderot, Rousseau, Voltaire, with the whole philosophic legion. All arm themselves against religion from the same arsenal from which the heretics of the sixteenth century took theirs, no longer, like them, to attack some particular doctrines, but to batter down the whole edifice of Christianity. Dogmas, mysteries, precepts, authority and practice, are proclaimed, with a unanimous voice, as the work of the ignorance and stupidity of the barbarous ages. Hence, in their estimation, as in that of their disciples, only one thing remained standing — paganism. In fact, we shall soon see the men of 1793 undertake to govern the world with the ideas of Sparta, Athens, and of Rome.

CHAPTER XXII.
CONTINUATION.

TO exalt the pagans, and condemn our fathers in the faith, has been the bent of public education in Europe during the last three centuries. And is not this a most complete violation of that law which says — *Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long?* But this is not all: Christianity gave, as the base of the family, unity and indissolubility of the conjugal bond, and the sacred right of the father over his child. For fifteen hundred years Europe had lived under this principle, to which Christian nations owe their morality and strength. Nothing could be more foreign to their ideas than divorce and profligacy; nothing is more rare than to find examples of it during the course of their history; nothing is condemned with greater indignation; nothing inspires a more general or a more profound horror; whilst, on the other hand, nothing is more faithfully respected than the rights of paternal authority.

How, then, does it occur that, from the commencement of the sixteenth century, polygamy and divorce reappear under the authority of the chiefs of the reform? How is it that from that time to our days, this fatal innovation has had an uninterrupted succession of advocates and apologists in Germany, England, and France? How is it that, after some protestations, divorce has become the law throughout the half of Europe? How is it that the rights of the father over his child cease to be recognized and are trampled underfoot? Where has modern society drawn its ideas so foreign to all that is Christian? How can we explain the facility with which these ideas have passed into the laws and customs?

Oh! my God! this sad mystery explains itself. By proposing antique paganism to the admiration of the rising generations, Europe has become familiarized with its institutions, its models, and its masters. Now, all these masters and models, so strongly recommended as models of legislation, were champions of polygamy and divorce: they justified it by their reasoning, whilst poets celebrated its praises, and passion applauded.

The legislator of the republic of Sparta, whose austere virtue we are taught so much to admire, Lycurgus, made marriage obligatory on all, and obliged the man to ravish her whom he desired to espouse; and as a consequence of his principle, that the family is instituted but to give robust citizens to the state, he authorized promiscuous intercourse.¹ To be consistent, he instituted a severe punishment on bachelors, and held up to public scorn the most precious virtue in the world — virginity. “A mark of infamy was set upon those who would not marry. They were not permitted to appear in the public places. The officers of the city obliged them to parade through the most populous streets, in the depth of winter, in a state of nakedness, at the same time reciting some verses made expressly to ridicule themselves; in fine, when they grew old, the honors shown to other aged persons were not bestowed on them.”²

Taking up the principle of the most absolute communism, Lycurgus declared that the children belonged to the state in preference to their parents. It was no longer for domestic life that marriages were made, and the paternal authority over what it held the most sacred was confiscated to the state. Thus the child, that precious treasure of the family, was pitilessly torn from the maternal embrace, by the proprietor of the family, that is, by the state; instructed in the state schools, brought up according to the caprice of the state, or condemned to perish as soon as born, if it did not betoken that physical usefulness of which the state was jealous. “On the birth of an infant,” continues Plutarch, “the father had no power to bring it up according to his will, but he carried it to a certain place destined for the purpose, which was called Lesche; there it was examined, and if found to be well formed and robust, orders were given that it should be preserved; but if, on the contrary, it was deformed or sickly, it was thrown into a place vulgarly called Apothetes . . . At seven years of age, the child that had not fallen under the severity of the law was definitively separated from its parents, and the state took charge of it.”³ “Now,” adds Plutarch, “the oracle had declared Lycurgus the well-beloved of the gods, rather a god than a man. He showed that a perfect being is not an imaginary being, as some have thought, since he displayed to the world a nation of philosophers. The laws of Lycurgus are well calculated to form man in the practice of virtue, and to maintain a mutual affection amongst citizens.”⁴ The historian prefers them to those of all the other states of Greece; and he

¹ *Life of Lycurgus*, p. 30.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴ *Ibid.*

is careful to inform us that those who have written with any success on laws and politics, as Plato, Diogenes, Zeno, and others, have taken Lycurgus for their model; that Aristotle bestowed great praises on him, and proclaimed him worthy of the sacrifices which the Lacedæmonians offered up to him as a god.⁵

In fact, the principles of Lycurgus form, with some slight modifications, the constitution of the Christian family in Greece and Rome, and for three centuries the youths of Europe have passed seven years of their lives in the admiration of these oracles. And what is the result? — Inevitably two things: first, that the philosophers, legislators, and learned men of modern times, faithful to their college impressions, have displayed in their works the principles that regulated the Lacedæmonian family; the second, that nothing has been neglected to apply these principles to the Christian family.

A passionate admirer of Lycurgus, whom he did not fear to approve on a most revolting point of morality, Montesquieu, thus spoke of him; he said: "This immortal man knew how to practice virtue by means that appeared opposed to it."⁶ Bolingbroke, Potter, Helvetius, Collins, Tindal, Rousseau, and all the encyclopædists, speak like the oracle of legislation, and extol the ideas of Lycurgus, and demand the application of them for the happiness of mankind. Nothing is more instructive than to hear them. Lycurgus did not acknowledge the religious character of marriage; they deny the sacrament that ennobles and sanctifies it.

Lycurgus did not admit the indissolubility of the conjugal bond; they have advocated the advantages of divorce, and caused it to become law.

Lycurgus authorized concubinage; they have maintained that there is nothing reprehensible in it, provided it be durable. Lycurgus justified promiscuous intercourse; they maintain that polygamy is but a matter of calculation.

Lycurgus contemned celibacy and virginity; they denounce and turn them into derision.⁷

Lycurgus denied paternal authority; they do so more completely, if possible. "No man," say they, "has received from Heaven the right to command others. If nature has established any authority, it is the paternal authority; but this has its bounds, and in a natural state it ceases immediately when the child is able to act for itself. The rights of man over his fellow-man can only be founded on the happiness he procures, or hopes to procure, him; without this, the power which he

⁵ Life of Lycurgus.

⁶ *Spirit of the Law*, tom. i, book 4, c. 6.

⁷ See our work on the Family, tom. ii. p. 417, and following.

exercises over him would be violence, usurpation, manifest tyranny. It is only on the power of rendering us happy that all legitimate authority is founded. *No mortal has received from nature the right to command another; but we accord it with our own free will to him from whom we do receive an advantage. . . . The authority a father exercises over his family is only founded on the advantages it is presumed he can procure it.*"⁸

This is not enough. Whilst philosophers and lawyers, pupils of paganism, labor to bring it back into the family, poets and writers of romance, formed in the same school, declaim on all occasions and in all languages the benefits of this new legislation. More intelligible, more agreeable, and consequently more dangerous than that of the metaphysicians, their voice never ceases to resound.

What, let us ask, are those theatrical representations, either translated from paganism, or animated by its spirit, with which Europe has been inundated since the *Renaissance*: comedies, tragedies, dramas, melodramas, vaudevilles, light poetry, and songs; what, we ask, are all of these, if not an incessant teaching of divorce and adultery, contempt of marriage and paternal authority; an open or disguised attack upon modesty and continence, of virginity and filial piety; the glorification and constant excitation of that passion which is, at the same time, the most violent, and the most destructive to domestic society?

At this spectacle, which was perfectly unknown in the Ages of Faith, every man capable of tracing the effect to its cause will say: Pagan teaching has planted the pagan tree of sensualism in the heart of the young generations; the young generations have transmitted what they received, and these doctrines are the natural blossoms of the tree so carefully cultivated; but they are only the blossoms, the fruits are the second consequence inevitably resulting from modern education.

Disciples of pagan philosophers and lawyers, admirers of sensual writers, the regenerators of Europe, at the end of the last century, looked upon it as a duty of conscience to introduce pagan ideas into domestic life. When in power, they applied themselves to the work; they deprived marriage of its religious character, granted divorces, rewarded unmarried mothers, abolished all vows, drove from their convents religious men and women, weakened, as much as they could, paternal authority, and through the organ of Rabaut Saint-Etienne they renewed,

⁸ *Encyclop. Political Authority; Emile*, tom. iv.; *Système de la Nature*, tom. i. p. 340, etc.

word for word, the principle of Lycurgus, that the child belongs to the state in preference to its family.

As a natural consequence, as the Spartan legislator appointed that the new-born child should be examined in order to see whether it were worthy to live, so the modern Lycurguses have appointed that, in order to enjoy public life, the child shall bear the effigy of the state. Such is the invasion of paganism in our manners, that the savage measure has only met with a feeble opposition; that it has survived all the revolutions; that it has numerous admirers, and in fine, that it has glided into the new law on education.

What we here state is not difficult to prove; and for this purpose we will give the words of a man who has perfectly fulfilled his task. "M. Thiers, M. Barthélemy, Saint-Hilaire, and other partisans of the law, think that the Roman code is excellent for forming the heart and mind of youth: be it so. Let them plunge their children into it — I leave them free to do so; but let them, at the same time, give me the liberty also to withdraw mine from it, as from a pestiferous air. Gentlemen of the regulations, what appears sublime to you, appears odious to me; that which satisfies your conscience alarms mine. You are perfectly convinced that, in a social and moral point of view, the *beau ideal* is in the past. 'We dare to say to an age proud of itself,' says M. Thiers, 'that in antiquity is found what there is most beautiful in the world.' For myself, I have not the happiness to participate in this desolating opinion. You think that our opinions, our ideas, our manners, should be, as much as possible, cast in the antique mold; it is in vain that I study the social law of Sparta and of Rome; I only find violence, injustice, imposture, perpetual wars, slavery, turpitude, false politics, false morals, false religion. What you admire, I abhor. But, in fine, keep your judgment, and leave me mine.

"In virtue of your law, three kinds of education offer themselves: that of the state, that of the clergy, and that of the pretended free institutions. What I ask is, that these latter may be really free. That whilst the university and the clergy teach what they please, we may also form men according to other methods . . .

"Let the university teach what it cherishes, the clergy what they know, — Greek and Latin. Let both make Platonists and tribunes; but let them not hinder us from forming, by other processes, men adapted for our country and the age in which we live. For, if this liberty is denied to us, what bitter derision is it to tell us at every moment, — *You are free!*

"On the 23rd February, M. Thiers said, for the fourth time: 'I will constantly repeat what I have said. The liberty given by the law we have

framed is according to the constitution. I defy you to prove the contrary. If this is not liberty, I maintain there is no other possible. Formerly they could not teach without the permission of Government: this we have removed, and everyone may now teach. Formerly they said: 'Teach such a thing, and do not teach such another.' Now they say: 'Teach all you will.' — And this is the liberty I insist on as so entire.'

"In virtue of your law I found a college. As a father, I pay for the education of my children, without aid from any one. As a tax-payer, I pay for the education of others, for I cannot refuse the impost for the Lyceums. Am I then free? — No, no; say rather that you propose sodality in a socialist sense, but do not pretend to call it liberty.

And this is only the least important side of the question; there is another more serious. I give the preference to freedom of education, because the official education to which you oblige me to subscribe, although I receive no advantage from it, appears to me communist and pagan. My conscience objects that my sons should be impregnated with Spartan and Roman ideas, which, in my eyes, are but the glorification of violence and brigandage; I therefore submit to pay for the education of my sons and the impost for the sons of others. But what is it I find? I find that your mythological and warlike teaching has been indirectly imposed on my free college by the ingenious mechanism of four grades, and that I must bend my conscience to your views, or make my children pariahs of society. You have told me four times that I am free; you may tell me so a hundred times, and a hundred times I will reply, I am not."⁹

This is the state we are in after thirty years of unheard-of efforts to break the Spartan despotism of the state, and this, too, under a law saluted as a law of liberty. Add this fact to the others that have been signalized in this chapter, and who can deny the serious influence of classic paganism on domestic life?

⁹ *Baccalaur et Socialism*, by M. F. Bastiart, deputy, etc., p. 59, et seq.

CHAPTER XXIII.

INFLUENCE OF CLASSIC PAGANISM ON SOCIETY.

CHRISTIANITY is the law of universal charity. It teaches two things; respect and devotedness. Conqueror of the world, and master of education during a thousand years, it had impregnated with its spirit the nations of Europe, by nourishing with its vivifying sap the young generations, and, as much as the weakness of human nature would permit, it formed society to its image. Hence, during the whole course of the Middle Ages, the almost entire absence of general warfare amongst Christian nations; hence the modification of intestine wars as compared with those of antiquity; hence that Catholic patriotism which, making religion a common country, considered all the Christians of the universe as brothers, for whom its gold and blood were always ready, whatever might be the clime under which they suffered; hence also that chivalric spirit which placed at the disposal of the weak the disinterested influence of the noble and the strong.

Thus it was that the sovereign power, confined within just limits by the superior authority of religion, offered, during this period, more examples of sanctity on the throne, that is of heroic devotedness to the interests of the people, than all the other epochs of history; hence the local liberties, incomparably greater than any that have been enjoyed before or since; hence, in fine, the absolute liberty of the Church, the mother and guardian of all other liberties; of the Church that was never looked upon as a stranger or a rival, but which was loved, respected, and seconded in every way in her social action.

In the present times we have the other side of the picture. The characteristic of Europe during the last three hundred years has been hatred. "Hatred of God, the religion of whom they would not only abolish, but his name also; hatred of his priests, whom they calumniate, insult, and oppress, in the exercise of their functions, and whom certain men already proscribe in anticipation; hatred of kings, of nobles, and of established institutions; hatred of all authority; hatred of laws which

preserve peace and repress the passions; hatred of magistrates, who defend the laws; hatred in the state, and in the family; a universal hatred which manifests itself in rebellion, by murder and an ardent desire of destruction.”¹

In the purely political order, this hatred manifests itself in the following principles, which were totally unknown in the Ages of Faith

Almost continual warfare, both external and internal.

A ferocious love of liberty.

A savage patriotism.

A brutal despotism, passing in turns from the hands of the multitude to those of a single individual.

An abject servility.

A marked tendency towards communism and ruin.

Who has produced and keeps up this anomalous state of things? Whence have come these ideas, so different to those of Christianity? How have they been able to break in upon society? Why is it, that, banished from Europe for a thousand years, they have invaded it again during the last three centuries? Let us go back to the source, and interrogate education; it will reply: “It is I who form the man and society. For the last three hundred years, I have been pagan; instead of teaching love, I have taught hatred; I have formed man after my image; man has transmitted what he received, and society has become pagan, and hatred reigns.” In fact, the law of hatred was the law of the pagan world, and the great signs which announce its presence in modern Europe are exactly the same as those by which it manifested itself in the bosom of the ancient societies of Greece and Italy.

Exterior and intestine war is the foundation of the history of all the classic republics. Now, during the last three hundred years, what picture is offered daily for seven years, for the study and admiration of the youths of Europe? — War. Apart from some insignificant details of interior organization, what is learnt from Rome, Athens, Sparta, Thebes, Carthage, Peloponnesus, Macedonia, Persia, Spain, Gaul, and Germany? — War. The Etrurians, the Volscians, the Veians, the Samnites, and a crowd of others, are only known to us by their wars. Not only the men, but the gods also, present the same spectacle. Such is the element under which we have grown up.

There is not a field of battle we have not been made to explore, from Marathon to Trebia, from Arbela to Pharsalia; not a carnage that has escaped us; not the sacking of a city at which we have not assisted; no opposing armies amongst which we have not taken part; not a great

¹ *Essai sur l'Indiff.* tom. ii. pref. pp. 19 et 20.

captain whose life we have not read; whose exploits have not been made familiar to us, whose harangues have not been repeated to us, whose plans and stratagems have not been explained to us; in a word, there is not a chord in our heart but what has been long and deeply touched.

What were the causes and effects of these continual wars, the history of which nourished our young soul? It was universal hatred, daughter of egotism, manifesting itself in the exercise of brute force by the strongest injustice and brigandage. Yet we were taught to be impassioned with these works; we were taught to admire those who were the heroes of them; our books and masters gave them the names of great, illustrious, immortal men. We were carefully shown that, on their return from their expeditions, they were welcomed by the chants of the poets, honored by the senate, the Areopagus, and the Archons, covered with the applause of the people, and that they went up to the Capitol seated in cars of gold and ivory. These men and things have not only been offered to the admiration of those in the common ranks of life, but also to the children of nobles and kings. Called upon to educate the successor of St. Louis, Amyot, bishop of Auxerre, and translator of Plutarch, after the Scriptures, the reading of which it was customary to recommend, did not know any more accomplished models for a prince than the great men of Athens, Sparta, and Rome.

He wrote in the following terms to his royal pupil: — “Having had the good fortune to be placed near you from your earliest childhood, when you had scarcely reached your fourth year, in order to lead you to the knowledge of God and of letters, I thought what ancient authors would be most fitted for you to read, when you should come to a more advanced age; and it seemed to me that, after the Holy Scriptures, the *most beautiful work, and the one most worthy of the attention of a young prince, is the Lives of Plutarch*; I therefore examined what I had commenced to translate by the command of the late King Francis, my first benefactor, and completed the work, which being well received and having proved useful to you, I was encouraged to translate into your language other moral and philosophical works.”²

Thus, we must understand from this, that the histories of Constantine, Theodosius, Charlemagne, St. Louis, and so many other saints, kings or emperors, were less suited to form the mind and heart of a Christian prince than the lives of Theseus, Romulus, Lycurgus, Solon, Pericles, Marius, Sylla, Cæsar, Thrasybulus, and Brutus! Sacred literature soon disappeared from education, and no longer found access into the colleges; a hundred years after Amyot, Fenelon composed, for

² *Epistre au Roi très Christien Charles IX. de ce Nom.* Ed. 1582.

the heir of the *very Christian kingdom*, a gospel inspired by Minerva, of which Telemachus is the disciple, and Mentor the interpreter, and which is perfectly pagan throughout.

With the same view, instead of writing the lives and maxims of our great men and saints, to form the mind of the young duke of Burgundy, the venerable archbishop of Cambrai bestowed his time and genius on the *Odyssey*, and in abridging the lives and maxims of the ancient philosophers, Thales, Solon, and the rest. In fine, in our days, they do not hesitate to proclaim before the face of Europe that antiquity *contains all that there is the most beautiful in the world*.

It is in the midst of this concert of the praises of paganism, of its false great men, of its false virtues; in the continual noise of its battles, in the midst of its violence and injustice, that the young men of Europe have been formed for three hundred years; and from such a source they have been expected to draw sentiments of justice, mildness, modesty, subordination, abnegation, humility, and charity, which virtues are the vital conditions of Christian society.

But if the object had been to make men unjust, haughty, proud, insubordinate, and, when the occasion presented itself, ravagers of provinces, could better means have been employed? Is it not thus that the two famous heroes of the Thirty Years' War, which covered Europe with blood and ruins, were prepared; that truly pagan war, during which more horrors were perpetrated than the world had seen for ten centuries; that savage war, which destroyed more monuments of art than were ever destroyed by the hands of barbarians in early times? Is it not from such schools that have come our revolutionary chiefs who have carried desolation from Paris to Naples, from Lisbon to Moscow, returning, like the heroes of antiquity, laden with spoil? Was it not the conduct of the classic heroes they sought to imitate, and their names they invoked?

Exterior warfare, however, is only a part of the spectacle offered to the contemplation of youth by the pagan classics; interior struggles complete the picture. What is it that is most impressed upon us in the histories of Sparta, Rome, and Athens? The constant antagonism of the inferior towards the superior classes; the horror of kings, designated under the name of tyrants; the inveterate hatred of the plebeians to the patricians, and the patricians to the plebeians; the storms of the Forum; the agrarian laws, the intervention of tribunes, and the popularity of conspirators; dissensions constantly breaking out, and factions always ready; the blood of citizens inundating the streets, and ostracism banishing in turn the conquerors of today and the vanquished of tomorrow.

Fine examples, sublime precepts; precious seeds these to plant in the souls of the youths of France! Under the name of Tarquin, we detested royalty; we were enthusiastic for the nobles and the people in turns; for the Gracchi and for Drusus, for Marius and for Sylla, for Pompey and for Cæsar. We almost always sided with the people and their tribunes, and we felt growing up in us a hatred to power, and a jealousy for the superiority of fortune or of nobility. To this must be added a savage patriotism, which neither respects natural rights, those of individuals, nor the sacred bonds of nature; witness Scævola burning his hand for having failed to assassinate Porsenna, or Brutus killing his children suspected of having conspired against their country, or a second Brutus stabbing his benefactor Cæsar, and many others, who were held up as types of patriotism and sublime adorers of liberty.

“What is this patriotism, the glorious boast of the antique world? Hatred of the stranger, destruction of all civilization, the stifling of all progress, the carrying of fire and sword through the world, the enchaining of women and children and old men to the triumphal car; this was glory, this was virtue. For these atrocities were reserved the marble of the statuary and the song of the poet. How often, alas! have our young hearts beat with admiration, and with emulation too, at these spectacles! Thus it was that our professors, venerable priests, full of care and charity, prepared us for a Christian life.”³

And these were called model times, the times of heroism and of greatness of soul; these times of pagan antiquity are called, by M. Thiers, “the calm, peaceable, and healthy asylum, destined to preserve the youth fresh and pure.” Such is the atmosphere the young generations of Europe have breathed for three centuries.

In fine, the tree has produced its fruit. It was thought our education, our literature, and our theaters might be given up with impunity to paganism, as if the logic of time did not always produce its results, with an inflexible rigor, from the theories proposed. The fatal band has now fallen, and the French Revolution was the frightful translation of our college ideas. It may doubtless be explained by causes that are foreign to classic teaching; but it cannot be doubted that this had added a crowd of false and pernicious notions, which have led to fatal consequences. The discourses pronounced at the Assembly and at the Convention are nothing but invocations to Cato, Fabricius, the two Brutuses, to the Gracchi and to Catiline. If they would commit an atrocity, they always find the example of a Roman to glorify it.

³ *Baccalaur. et Social.* p. 16.

“What education deposits in the mind transforms itself into acts. It is understood that Sparta and Rome are the models, therefore they must be copied or parodied. One would introduce the Olympic games, another the Agrarian laws, a third the black broth of the slaves. Robespierre would raise souls to the republican virtues of antiquity. Saint-Just offered the happiness of Sparta and Athens, and proposed that every citizen should carry the knife of Brutus under his cloak. The sanguinary Carrier would that youth should contemplate the brasier of Scævola, the death of Cicero, and the sword of Cato. Rabaut Saint-Etienne desired that, according to the precepts of the Cretans and the Spartans, the state should take possession of man from his cradle, or even before his birth. The section of the ‘*Quinze-Vingts*’ required that a church should be consecrated to Liberty, on the altar of which a fire should be kept perpetually burning by young virgins. And the whole Convention desired to see our country produce imitations of Brutus and Publicola.”

It was not enough that paganism breathed in every discourse, in every maxim, and in every private act; it passed into the laws, into public morals, and into names. The right of strength, that hideous law of antiquity, became the sole rule of legislators. Innocent blood stained the scaffold and mingled in torrents with the rivers; spoliation became the order of the day throughout France.

The public *fêtes* became pagan: the Genii, Time, Age, the Seasons, cars drawn by oxen with golden horns, and bacchanalian groups, figured in the processions. The most infamous of the heathen deities was placed upon the altars, and surrounded by her priests and adorers; the Pantheon received those citizens who were deemed worthy of the apotheosis. We had the *republic*, the *people king*, *Lyceums*, *Athenæums*, *Prytaneums*, *Gymnasiums*, *Hippodromes*, *Olympic Circles*, *Comitia*, *Municipalities*, *Prefects*, *Consuls*, a *Dictator*, a *Tribune*, a *Senate*, an *Emperor*, *Decrees*, and the “*Senatus Consultum*,” the *Eagle led our legions to victory*; and that nothing might be wanting in this atrocious and burlesque parody, we place on our heads the *Phrygian bonnet*. Morals became ferocious, a familiarity was introduced into the language; the Roman vow of hatred to royalty was restored, their shades were everywhere invoked, and Brutus had his followers. The French in the eighteenth century were proud to bear the names of Cato, Scævola, Manlius, Anacharsis, Draco, Simonides, Socrates, Gracchus, and of Anaxagoras.

How could such follies, not to call them by a more severe name, be introduced with such strange success? Charles Nodier will reply. After having painted the horrible scenes of the revolution, of the bare-faced

licentiousness of the popular assemblies, he adds, "What is remarkable is, that we were quite ready for this exceptional order of things, having been assiduously prepared by an anomalous education for all the aberrations of a system of politics without base. We had no great difficulty in passing from our college studies to the debates of the *Forum* and the war of the slaves. Our admiration was secured beforehand in favor of the institutions of Lycurgus, and the tyrannicides of the Panathænæa: we had never heard of anything else.

"The oldest amongst us related that, on the eve of the new events, the prize for rhetoric was contested by two pleaders in the style of Seneca the orator, the one advocating the elder, and the other the younger Brutus. I do not know which deserved the prize in the eyes of the judges, he who had killed his father, or he who had killed his children; but the laureate was encouraged by the intendant, complimented by the first president, and crowned by the archbishop. The next day a revolution was spoken of as though they did not know that it had been prepared in the education of the people.

"If it be asked who contributed most, Voltaire or Rousseau, to this annihilation of our ancient monarchical and religious doctrines, I own I should be considerably embarrassed to reply; but I will not dissimulate that Titus Livius and Tacitus have had a great part in it. This testimony, the philosophy of the eighteenth century, cannot but render to the Jesuit, to the Sorbonne, and the university."⁴

⁴ *Souvenirs*, tom. i. 88.

CHAPTER XXIV.
CONTINUATION.

WE have seen ancient paganism reproduced, feature for feature, in modern Europe, in the form of almost continual warfare, both exterior and interior, in a ferocious love of liberty, and in a savage patriotism, so perfectly copied from the Greeks and Romans, that we are unable to distinguish between the modern and ancient Brutus; between the language, the projects, the acts, and the manners of the one and the other. Let us complete this picture, which we cannot too much study.

What other lesson did classic paganism give to youth? Ignoring the true notion of power, it held up despotism as the sole law of society, and showed this brutal despotism passing alternately from the hands of the multitude to those of a single individual. Such is the idea with which childhood has been familiarized during three centuries. It has shown this power, not as a thing of divine origin, not as a divine trust, of which he who holds it must render an account to God; not as a charge which exacts a continual sacrifice of the superior to the inferior, but as a thing of human origin, a human trust, to be accounted for to man alone; not as a charge, but as a privilege, which brings glory, honor, and pleasure to him who possesses it. In fine, it falsifies the notion of power, which being merely a human mandate, or a conquest of strength, always finishes either by the despotism of one, or of the multitude.

Hence, in all the classic republics those popular assemblies, incessantly renewed to transmit the power, to determine its limits, and to judge the responsibility of those who held it; hence, those factious tribunes, to counterbalance their authority, and a jealous senate to watch over its exercise. From this arose a clashing of interests and frequent bickerings, followed by conspiracies for the possession of power, and plots against the life of the tyrant; then came the praises, equally warm, in favor of the assassin and the tyrant, of Brutus, and of Cæsar, of Cicero and of the Triumvirs. Thus, the republic, always tossed about, invariably finished by falling into ungovernable license, and from that into abject servility.

Such is the new feature of the picture with which youth has been familiarized for the last three hundred years, of which M. Thiers has said, and which is still re-echoed throughout the colleges of Europe, *Antiquity contains all that there is noble in the world.*

But here also let us judge the tree by its fruit. What are the political results of such an education? On the one hand, a complete alteration of the true notion of power; and on the other, the glorification and the practice of these subversive theories.

As regards the alteration of the true notions of power, the Christian ages repeated, with St. Paul, that all power is derived from God. But say to Europe, pupil of paganism, that all power comes from God, and is renewed by Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords; attempt to combat the pagan doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, and you will see whether there is a single nation that will understand you; you will see how many amongst the sages will answer you otherwise than with a smile of pity. Read the solemn discourses, such as may be considered to a certain degree national, those delivered from the throne, or by parliamentary orators, and you will find in every phrase the words *nation, people, country*, invoked as the supreme source of right and of duty. And why this frequent repetition of those names substituted for that of God, if not to imply that the authority they express is the source of all power at present acknowledged in the world?

With respect to the glorification and practice of the subversive theories of paganism, read the juris-consults, the legists, and the philosophers of modern Europe, all nourished with this beautiful pagan antiquity, and what do you find? — They will tell you that “Society is a contract; that in order to be legitimate, a government should be founded on the free consent of the subjects, and that without this, it is nothing but violence, usurpation, and brigandage;¹ that all power comes from the people; that the people alone is not called upon to legitimize its acts;² that to teach that princes hold their power from God is a maxim invented by the clergy, who only place the king above the people, that they themselves may exercise an authority over the king in the name of the Divinity, and that therefore it is only a chain of iron that holds an entire nation under subjection to a single man;³ that the supreme magistrate is but the head clerk of the nation;⁴ that in the ages of barbarism, minds lost in an epidemic of fanaticism might be fed upon

¹ Rousseau, *Emile*, tom. iv. p. 349; *Encyclop. Autorité Politique; Système de la Nature*, tom. i. cc. 9 et 16.

² Rousseau, *ib.*

³ Raynal, *Hist. des Etablis. etc.* i. 16, p. 130.

⁴ Helvetius, *De l'Homme*, tom. ii. n. 4, p. 596.

ambiguous words, and the flock that marched to the noise of trumpets might be attracted by empty sounds; but when a state is civilized, it is not then that she should seek, in the darkness of ignorance and error, the foundations of legitimate authority,⁵ that the people are the only sovereign; that they have the right to judge kings; that their mandate comes from their will; that when kings violate it, their mandate is broken, and insurrection becomes a sacred duty.”⁶

The people have risen from one end of Europe to the other, and they have judged their *tyrants*, playing with their crowns as a child with its rattle. In less than half a century we have seen *fifty-two* thrones broken in pieces, and their ruins trampled underfoot by the *sovereign people*; shouts of triumph have been raised to the assassins of kings, as had already been to Scævola, to Brutus, to Macro, and to Stephanus. Society, always divided by hatred and tossed about by parties, passed alternately from the most severe tyranny to the most abject servility; we have seen the proudest Brutus of 1793 become the most vapid sycophant of the fortunate soldier who embroidered his vest; and now, even in spite of the proud pretensions of liberty and equality, the people are ready to submit, without a word, to the Tiberius who would place his foot upon their neck. Until they obey the saber of a prætorian, they obey the pen of a clerk, as a machine obeys the blind force that puts it in motion.

It remains for us to show the last fruits of the pagan tree.

“True progress,” says the illustrious Spanish publicist Donoso Cortes, “consists in submitting the human element, which corrupts liberty, to the divine element, which purifies it. Society has followed a different path in looking upon the empire of faith as dead; and in proclaiming the empire of reason and the will of man, it has made evil, which was only relative, contingent and exceptional, absolute, universal, and necessary. This period of rapid retrogression commenced in Europe with the restoration of pagan literature, which has brought about successively the restoration of pagan philosophy, religious paganism, and political paganism. At the present time, the world is on the eve of the last of these restorations, — that of pagan socialism.”⁷

Yes, the socialism that threatens us is the fruit of classic paganism. It is taught by the authors which the generations of Europe are led to consider as oracles, whose social theories they are taught to look upon as all that there is most perfect and most noble in the world.

⁵ Raynal, *ib. ib.*

⁶ Declarations and discourses of all the revolutionary orators from 1793 to 1848 inclusive.

⁷ Letter to M. Montalembert, June 4, 1849.

Socialism attacks property and the family in their foundations, and tends to realize, by the annihilation of individual liberty, to the profit of the state, the most frightful despotism that ever weighed upon the world.

The paganism we are taught to admire teaches and practices socialism in the family. “Legislators of a warlike people, Lycurgus and Plato saw that the family would weaken military devotedness. We feel it ourselves, since we interdict marriage to our soldiers, yet the population must not be stopped; how, therefore, must we resolve the problem? What was the theory of Plato and the practice of Lycurgus? Promiscuous intercourse. — And these are names we are taught to pronounce with idolatry!”⁸

Rome herself, worthy pupil of Greece, consecrated divorce and concubinage.⁹ But more, in the antique family, socialism absorbed the liberty of the wife and the child to the profit of the father, as the state absorbed the liberty of the father.

In fact, Lycurgus established the principle that the child belonged, not to the father but to the state; and we have seen with what rigorous barbarity this socialist law was accomplished. We have seen also that these pagan theories have become the basis of the institutions of modern Europe, by divorce, conscription, and by the monopoly of education. If they have not been reproduced to the letter, we owe it to Christianity, whose secret influence prevents our being so bad as our principles.

With respect to property, it is impossible throughout antiquity to find a definition that can be at all tolerated.¹⁰ The true basis of property is the will of the proprietor of all things; it is that word of God, *Thou shalt not steal — non furtum facies*. Antiquity had either forgotten or neglected this, and instead of founding the right of possession on the authority of God, they founded it on that of man, that is to say, on law. But if human law could create property, it could also destroy it; and here we have the principle of modern socialism.

⁸ *Baccalaur. et Social.* p. 14.

⁹ See *Hist. de la Famille*, tom. i. cc. 9 et 10.

¹⁰ Antiquity was unable to give one. In those days man, not being seriously responsible before God, could not be really inviolable before men. “In fact, man is only inviolable because he has an absolute responsibility before God; and property, which is the fruit of man, is only inviolable through the inviolability of man. From the moment he ceases to be responsible before God, he loses his inviolability on Earth; his property is no more inviolable than that of the wolf. Let him defend it if he can; but property is no longer legitimate.”

As to the absolute superiority of the state and the absorption of individual liberty in the will of a chief, though this chief be called the Areopagus, the Archontes, the Senate, Augustus, or Tiberius, the principle was acted on throughout antiquity with a rigor that can only be equalled by the socialism that is preparing for us. The child was a slave, the wife was a slave, three parts of the human race were slaves. This order of things was only the carrying out of what philosophy taught. Its most celebrated representative, Plato, disengaging successively all the elements of the multiple, arrived at the absolute unity, as the summit of his dialectic. Circumscribed within the domain of abstract ideas, this theory was not more dangerous than another; but applied to the government of human things, it inclosed the irremediable evil of annihilating the individual in sacrificing him to the whole body. Plato, always a logician, and with eyes fixed on the absolute unity, proclaimed, *de facto*, in his *Republic*, community of goods and of women, and the direction of the citizen by the state, from the cradle to the tomb.

Such are the institutions we are taught to admire, and yet we are surprised to find men jealous to rival Minos, Lycurgus, Solon, Numa, Plato; to become the authors of constitutions and republics, such as were to be found amongst the Greeks and Romans.

“I exaggerate, you will say; it is not possible that our studious youth draw such deplorable opinions and sentiments from antiquity; yet, what do you expect they will derive from it? Make an effort of memory, and call to mind the dispositions with which you entered into the world. . . . For myself, when I see our young people cast by tens of thousands in the mold of Brutus and the Gracchi, and afterwards launched, incapable of any useful work, into the throng and the press, I am astonished they resist the trial; for classic education has not only the imprudence to plunge us into the Græco-Roman life, it inspires us with a passion for it, teaching us to consider it as the *beau-ideal* of humanity, a sublime type, too elevated for modern souls, but which, however, we ought to try to imitate without ever pretending to attain.”¹¹

Classic teaching is right, for we shall never attain to the social system of paganism. We shall either fall much below, or remain much above it. “The Christian revolution is a realized fact, and we cannot escape its consequences. You may call to life all the political, military, poetical, philosophical, and artistic geniuses of the ancient world, and they will be unable to reconstruct such societies as made their glory. Break through the puerile circle of college ideas to examine realities. Do you

¹¹ *Baccalaur. et Social.* p. 20.

not see that the social banquet, to which Europe of ancient days scarcely admitted ten millions of masters, served by two hundred millions of slaves, is much too confined for the two hundred and fifty millions of masters, not one of whom but would disdain him who should say, 'Be my slave'?

"That the spirit of fraternity, equality, and liberty, which now agitates the Christian world, is much to be regretted by the admirers of antique societies, is very probable, but it is a living fact.

"Now observe one of the consequences of this fact: the space that would have been sufficient for ten millions of citizens formed by the legislators of Greece and Latium would be insufficient for an equal number of men brought up with the principles of the Gospel, and how would it then do for two hundred and fifty millions of Christians?

"We have populations twenty times more numerous and incomparably more exacting in their ideas than the free populations of antiquity. To expect these masses of giants to move in good order, or to remain immoveable in the gymnasium where the sons of Cecrops, of Lycurgus, of Romulus, and of Numa, took their pastime, is to expect what is impossible, and is to provoke disasters.

"This, however, has been the object of our modern systems of education, if indeed it is permitted to call by such a name the unintelligible amalgamation of the most incongruous elements."¹²

¹² Martinet, *On the Education of Men*.

CHAPTER XXV.
CONTINUATION.

LET us continue our explanation of the great fact that occupies so much attention at the present, and which prepares itself on the threshold of the future like a giant before a terrified world; we allude to Communism and Socialism. How can you expect that our studying youths will not imbibe these principles from our pagan education, since they are fully developed therein, and some of our most distinguished men have not been able to withstand them? We state this with great regret, at the same time we cannot think that the author is guilty as to intention: “Did not his long frequentation of the ancients make a Communist of Fenelon, of that man whom modern Europe justly looks upon as a model of moral perfection? Read his *Telemachus*, that book which is eagerly placed in the hands of youth; you will there find that Fenelon borrows traits from Wisdom herself to instruct his legislators. And on what plan does he organize his model society? On the one side, the legislator thinks, invents, and acts; on the other, society remains impassive and inert. The principle of action is thus snatched from the body of men to become the attribute of a single individual. Precursor of our most intrepid modern organizers, Fenelon decides upon the lodging, the feeding, the clothing, the amusements, and the occupations of all the Salentins. He states what they are allowed to eat and drink, the plan upon which their houses are to be built, the number of rooms they are to contain, and the manner in which they are to be furnished.”¹

“Mentor,” says he, “established magistrates to whom the merchants rendered an account of their goods, of their profits, of their expenses, and of their undertakings . . . With this exception, commerce was perfectly free . . . He regulated the dress, the food, the furniture, and the size and style of the houses, according to the various grades of society. ‘Regulate the conditions by birth,’ said he to the king . . . ‘Let those of the first rank after yourself be clad in white — those of the second rank

¹ *Baccalaur. et Social.* p. 24.

in blue, — the third, in green, — the fourth, in yellow, — the fifth, in pale red or rose — the sixth, in grey — and the seventh, which will be the lowest grade, in a mixture of yellow and white.’ Such were the costumes of a free people, according to their different conditions. All the slaves were to be dressed in a grey brown; no change was to be permitted either as to the nature of the material or the form.²

“He regulates in the same way the nourishment of the citizens and the slaves. He gives models of simple and graceful architecture. He wished that every house, of any consideration, should have a salon and a peristyle, with small chambers for all the free persons.”

Is it not easy to see in this an imagination excited by the reading of Plato and the example of Lycurgus, amusing itself with experiments on men as on old materials? ³ Where shall we find the omnipotence of the state, its right to regulate everything, its spirit of concentration, as dreamed of by the Socialist of the present day, written in more seducing terms? One is almost tempted to ask whether what we have just read is really a page of *Telemachus*, or a chapter of the *Icarus* of M. Cabet.

“There is another author, almost equal to Fenelon in intellect and rectitude, yet who has had more experience in education, it is Rollin. But to what a degree of moral and intellectual infirmity did not the long frequentation of antiquity reduce this man? It is impossible to read his works without a feeling of sadness and pity. It is not possible to say whether he is Christian or pagan, so impartial is he between one and many gods. The miracles of the Bible and the legends of the days of the heroes find the same credulity in him. His placid features are constantly darkened by the shadow of the warlike passions; he speaks but of warlike instruments; for him, one of the most interesting social problems is to know whether the Macedonian phalanx was better than the Roman legions. He exalts the Romans for giving themselves up to those sciences which make domination their object, such as eloquence, politics, and war. All his incense is for Mars and Bellona; scarcely a grain is offered to Christ. . . . The intervention of legislature in all things appears to him so indispensable, that he gravely felicitates the

² Fenelon goes so far as to let us see that his desire was that the ladies of modern times should return to the costume of ancient Greece. “I would point out to the young maidens the beautiful simplicity displayed in the statues and other figures, that have come down to us, of the Greek and Roman women; they will there see the grace and majesty of hair negligently knotted, and flowing draperies. It will be well, indeed, that they hear the conversation of artists and others, who possess the exquisite taste of antiquity.”

³ *Ib.* p. 26.

Greeks, that a man named Pelasgus came to teach them to eat acorns, before which, says he, they ate grass like beasts.”⁴

With some reserve, Rollin admits, without difficulty, that the laws of Lycurgus embraced the principle of communism, that *law creates property*. “Robbery,” says he, “was permitted in Sparta; it was severely punished with the Scythians. The reason of this difference is evident; it is, that the *law, which alone decides the possession and use of property, had, with the Scythians, accorded no portion of the property of one to the use of another, whilst the law of the Lacedæmonians had done just the reverse.*” “If the law,” says Proudhon, “is the origin of property, why may it not also be the origin of robbery? What can we reply to this question?”

After Rollin comes Montesquieu, whose every page for a long time enjoyed the privilege of authority, and exercised a great influence on society. Montesquieu was a worthy pupil of paganism, and never ceased to admire and recommend to the admiration of others the writings and institutions of antiquity, such as were the most barbarous and decidedly communist . . . “The ancient Greeks,” says he, “impressed with the necessity of bringing up a people, who lived under a popular government, *in virtue*, established singular institutions. . . . The laws of Crete formed the model for those of Lacedæmonia, and those of Plato served to correct them. I ask a little attention to *the extent of the genius* required in these legislators to see that, in shocking all the received customs, in confounding all the virtues, they showed *their wisdom* to the universe. Lycurgus, by mingling larceny with the *spirit of justice*, the severest slavery with *extreme liberty*, the most atrocious sentiments with the *greatest moderation*, gave stability to his city. He appeared to take from it all its resources, arts, commerce, money, and walls; its citizens had ambition *without the hope* of amelioration; they *had the natural sentiments without being either child, father, or mother*. It is by such a road that Sparta was *led to greatness and to glory*; with such an infallibility of institutions, nothing could be obtained against her in victory, provided she retained her police.”⁵

Farther on, exalting the spirit of ambition, which, after the example of the Greeks and Romans, impels the present rising generation of Europe to scorn the humble professions, and thus causes a general *déclassement*, which is a formidable auxiliary to socialism, he thus expresses himself: — “We must bear in mind that in the Greek cities, particularly in such as turned their attention more particularly to war,

⁴ *Baccalaur. et Social.* p. 28.

⁵ *Esprit de Lois*, liv. iv. c. 8.

all labor and professions which might lead to the gaining of money were looked upon as *unworthy of a free man*. ‘Most of the arts,’ says Xenophon, ‘corrupt the body of those who exercise them, obliging them to the retirement of their own hearth: they *have neither time for their friends nor for the republic*. It was only in *the corruption* of some democracies that the artisans were enabled to become *citizens*.’ This is what Aristotle teaches; and he maintains that a good republic would never give them the right of *citizenship*.”⁶ Need we be surprised if, in our time, all wish to become *citizens*, since books of philosophy and revolutionary discourses are filled with declarations against the arts, and the sovereign people stupidly destroy their *chefs-d’œuvre*? “Agriculture,” continues Montesquieu, “was also a *servile* work, and usually exercised by some *conquered people*: the Helots amongst the Lacedæmonians, the Periciæ amongst the Cretes, the Penestes amongst the Thessalians, and other peoples amongst the other republics. In fine, all commerce was considered derogatory amongst the Greeks. *It was enough that a citizen should render some service to a slave, to a tenant, or to a stranger, to shock the spirit of Greek liberty*. Plato, in his laws, proposed that any citizen who entered into commerce should be punished. All this caused great embarrassment in the Greek republics; for whilst they were not to occupy themselves in commerce, agriculture, or the arts, they were not to be idle. Thus, they turned their thoughts towards the gymnasium, and such exercises as had reference to war: their institution provided no others.”⁷

What follows is still more directly communist: “It is not sufficient,” adds the worthy patron of pagan antiquity, “that in a good democracy the *land should be equally divided*; these portions must be *small, as with the Romans*. . . . As equality of fortune maintains frugality, frugality keeps up equality of fortunes. These two, however different, cannot subsist without each other.”⁸

Further on he highly approves of an institution that would cause Messrs. Cabet and Considerant to smile. “The Samnites,” says he, “had a custom which, in a small republic, and more particularly in the situation in which they were placed, must of necessity produce a *good effect*. They assembled all the young men, and examined them. The one who was declared the *best*, took for wife the person he liked to chose; the second then chose, and so forth with the rest. . . . It is impossible to imagine a more noble reward, or one less expensive to a small state, at

⁶ *Esprit des Lois*, liv. v.

⁷ *Ib.* *ib.*

⁸ *Esprit des Lois*, liv. v. c. 6.

the same time it was admirably calculated to act on both sexes. The Samnites descended from the Lacedæmonians, and Plato, whose institutions are but the development of the laws of Lycurgus, gave much the same law.”⁹ Montesquieu would have done well to have pointed out the *admirable effects* of these marriages imposed by the law. All we know is, that one thing was not very admirable, that the liberty of one of the parties was counted for nothing. When will these apostles of liberty be consistent?

As time advances, so the fruit of the pagan tree approaches maturity. After Montesquieu comes Rousseau, who more than any other inspired the French Revolution. “His works,” says Louis Blanc, “were on the table of the Committee of Public Safety. His paradoxes, which were mistaken in his time for literary boldness, soon resounded through the assemblies of the nation in the shape of dogmatic and cutting truths. His language was vehement and pathetic, like that of a *son of Cornelia*. Pagan in style as well as in ideas, Rousseau said of himself, that the reading of Plutarch made him what he was. Then, rendering homage to Sparta, his nursing mother, he exclaims, ‘Shall I forget that it was in the bosom of Greece arose that city, as celebrated for its *happy ignorance*, as for the *wisdom* of its laws; that republic of *demigods rather than of men*, so superior to humanity did their virtues appear? O Sparta! Eternal shame of a vain doctrine! Whilst vice, led by the fine arts, introduced itself into Athens; whilst a tyrant, with so much care, there collected the works of the prince of poets, thou drivest from thy walls both art and artists, the sciences and the learned!”¹⁰

After having, by his declarations, filled the public mind with Spartan ideas, and prepared the atrocious vandalism of the French Revolution, he continued to inspire himself with antiquity to sap the foundations of society: “I suppose myself,” he says, “in the Lycæum of Athens, repeating the lessons of *my masters*, having Plato and Xenocrates for judges, and the human race for audience. So long as men were content with their rustic cabins, so long as they were satisfied to make their dress out of skins, and to paint their bodies with various colors prepared from feathers and shells . . . so long as they only occupied themselves with work such as *one could do*, they lived happily, were healthy and free. But immediately one man acquired the *succor of another*; immediately it was found useful for one person to have provisions for two, *equality disappeared, property introduced itself*, and labor became necessary. Metallurgy and agriculture were the two

⁹ Ib. liv. viii. c. 16.

¹⁰ *Discourse on the Re-establishment of the Arts and Sciences.*

arts produced by this great revolution. For the poet it is gold and silver; for the philosopher, *iron and corn*, that has civilized men and *lost the human race.*"¹¹

Quitting the social state to return to the state of nature; scorning all relations of superiority, of respect, of affection, and of property, which the social pact, the fruit of corruption, had established between men; to proclaim the inalienable and illimited right of every individual to all he attempts and can attain: such are, according to Rousseau, the *natural* duties of men; had he lived some few years longer, he would have seen these duties literally accomplished by his disciples, and Lycurgus, Plato, Xenocrates, his worthy masters, rejoice to find an interpreter so faithfully obeyed.

In fact, Rousseau said: "Property is a convention, a *human institution*, instead of saying that *liberty is a gift of nature.*" Mirabeau continues: "Property is a social creation: the laws not only protect and maintain property, *they create it.*" In his famous speech on the suppression of tithes, in which M. Thiers, the advocate of property, finds such decided traits of *reason* and of *irony*, the furious orator thus expresses himself: "Tithes are a subsidy with which the nation salaries the *officers of morality and instruction.*"

The unseemliness of these expressions caused a murmur on the right of the Assembly, when the eloquent marquis exclaimed: "It is time to abjure those ancient prejudices of ignorance and pride, which make men disdain the words *salary* and *salaried*. I only know three means of subsistence in society: one must be *mendicant, robber, or receive a salary*. The proprietor himself is but the first *pensioner*. What we vulgarly call property is nothing else than the price society pays him for the distribution he is charged to make to others by his consumption and expenses: proprietors are the *agents, the stewards* of the social body."

Robespierre added: "In defining liberty, the first need of man, *the most sacred of the rights he holds from nature*, we have said it has for limit the right of another. Why have you not applied this principle to property, which is a *social institution*, as if the laws of nature were less inviolable than the *conventions* of men? . . . Property is the right every citizen has to dispose of the goods that are guaranteed him by the law.'

It follows, from this, that the legislature can attach to the exercise of the right of property the conditions it pleases, since it has created it.

Robespierre also eagerly deduced from this definition the *right of labor*, the *right of assistance*, and a *progressive tax*. "Society," said he, "is bound to *provide for the subsistence of all its members*, either by

¹¹ *Discourse on the Inequality of Conditions.*

procuring them labor, or by assuring the means of existence to those who are not in a state to labor. The succors necessary to indigence are a debt of the rich towards the poor. It is for the law to determine the manner in which this debt shall be acquitted. The citizens whose revenues do not exceed what is necessary for their subsistence are dispensed from contributing towards the support of others. Those whose incomes are larger must contribute in proportion to their means."

Brutus Saint-Just is more explicit, and proclaims *labor a disgrace*, and communism the only means of *moralizing* the French. "A trade," says he, with Lycurgus, "but ill suits a true citizen. The hand of man is only made for the land and for arms. The day on which I shall be convinced that it is impossible to give to the French good morals, and to make them sensitive and inexorable towards tyranny and injustice, I will stab myself. If they were moral, all would go well; we must have institutions to purify them. In order to reform morals, we must begin by *satisfying the necessities of interest. Every one must receive a piece of land.* The children must be clad in linen in all seasons. They must lie on mats, and sleep for eight hours. They will be fed in common and live upon roots, fruit and vegetables, and bread and water. They must only touch meat after the age of sixteen years. Men having attained the age of twenty-five years, must declare in the temple, every year, the names of all their friends; and he who abandons his friend without sufficient reason will be banished."

We will now terminate these quotations, which might be multiplied to great length, adding only the following anecdote. When it became a question to give France the constitution of the year 3, Herault de Sechelles, one of the members of the commission charged with the work, found nothing better to take for his model than the *laws of Minos*. Consequently, he wrote to one of his friends, the author of *Anacharsis*, who was guardian of the National Library, praying him to send immediately the code of the Cretan legislature! After this, who can deny the power of college recollections, and the social influence of antiquity?

We have intentionally dwelt at length on the filiation of socialism. On the one hand, it constitutes the most formidable enemy of Europe at the present time, — on the other, attacking directly the material interest, it is better calculated than any other consideration to show the danger of classic paganism, of which it is incontestably the offspring. "Such were then, in a few words, the footsteps imprinted by the Græco-Latin Convention on the revolution. Plato marked the ideal. Priests and laity of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries lent themselves

to the celebration of this marvel. The hour of action came: Mirabeau descended the first step, Robespierre the second, Saint-Just the third, Antonelle the fourth, and Babeuf, more logical than all his predecessors, descended the last, which was that of absolute communism to pure Platonism. It would be well for us to give his own words, but we will confine ourselves to saying, for this is very characteristic, that he signed them *Caius Gracchus*.”¹²

To attenuate the influence of classic paganism, it is said: The inferior classes neither know Lycurgus nor Plato, yet they are socialists. We will leave our great admirer of the pagans, M. Thiers, the honor of replying: “The secondary teaching,” he says, “initiates children of the enlightened classes in the ancient languages . . . it is not merely words that they acquire, in learning Greek and Latin, *but noble and sublime things*;¹³ it is the history of humanity under simple, grand, and ineffaceable, images . . . The *secondary instruction* forms what is called, the enlightened classes of a nation. Now, if the enlightened classes do not form the entire nation, *why characterize it?* Their vices, their qualities, their tastes, both good and bad, are soon those of the whole nation; *they form the people themselves by the contagion of their ideas and sentiments*. (‘Hear! Hear!’) Antiquity — we dare say it to a nation proud of its age — antiquity contains all that there is *noble in the world*. Let us, gentlemen, — let us leave childhood in antiquity, as in a calm, peaceable, and healthy asylum, destined to preserve it fresh and pure.”¹⁴

Yes, gentlemen, continue to send youth back into the *beautiful* antiquity, where slavery is the base of the social system; where reciprocal hatred of *castes* is the universal feeling; where *divorce* is consecrated by law; where *socialism* is taught by philosophy, vaunted by eloquence, and celebrated by poetry; continue to give it for a pattern the *calm* of ancient Rome, the *peace* of ancient Rome, the *sanctity* of ancient Rome, and be sure that it will remain *fresh* and *pure*.

¹² *Baccalaur. et Social.* p. 55.

¹³ Spoliation, war, slavery, divorce, materialism, and communism.

¹⁴ *Rapport, etc.* 1844.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE NECESSITY OF CHRISTIAN CLASSICS. — OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

IF the foregoing deductions are, logically speaking, indisputable, they are far from being complete as to development. Yet, however imperfect they may be, the picture we have sketched is sufficient to show anyone, who is disposed to see, the disastrous effects of paganism in education. Thanks to it, Europe finds herself on the brink of a precipice, of which none can tell the depth. At the sight of this canker, which modern societies have nurtured so long in their bosom, at the sight of the caresses which are lavished upon it, one naturally asks, whence can arise such blindness? And our answer is, that the cause must be sought in the mysteries of human nature.

The introduction of paganism in education arose from the powerful reaction of the flesh against the spirit, — a revenge long meditated by the old man enchained by Christianity dominant in Europe, against the new man whose empire had been cruelly shaken during the long duration of the great schism in the West. Such was the fundamental cause of the triumphant return of paganism into the bosom of modern nations: the literary and artistic forms were nothing more than a pretext. One palpable fact, too little remarked, is a proof of this: the *Renaissance*, propagated at first with enthusiasm by all the enemies of the Church, consists essentially of two things, — the universal disparagement of Christian works, and a corresponding admiration of the works of paganism; a profound contempt of those ages inspired by Christianity, and a fanatic worship of those over which paganism reigned. Inquietude succeeded to astonishment. We have pointed out the evil, which is so deep, so inveterate, that it will be eagerly asked, is there any hope of finding a remedy? But admitting there is, would society accept the remedy prescribed? Unfortunately, the reply is doubtful. The remedy is evidently in the employment of Christian classics; but when these words are pronounced, we hear the lettered

portion of society exclaim, *absurdity, fanaticism, barbarism!* In spite of the progress of ideas during the last sixteen years, a storm of sarcasm awaits both the remedy and the unfortunate doctor who prescribes it. After contempt comes the plea of impossibilities.

In truth, we are not surprised at this explosion; it encourages us in proving that we have placed our finger upon the wound: paganism is always true to itself. When, under the Cæsars, it saw Christianity come to dispute the empire of the world, its academies and amphitheaters resounded with sanguinary cries, — *To the lions with the Christians!* At present, master of modern societies, the same cry, though couched in different terms, is raised against Christianity, which seeks once more to possess itself of the domain of education, for education is the empire, since it is the man.

We do not attempt to refute the sarcasms that may be addressed to us, contenting ourselves with pitying those who apply them, and endeavoring to raise ourselves above their reach: but after these outrages comes the plea — impossibilities, of which the list extends to a great length; and since they are proposed not only by the declared enemies of Christianity, but also by men who are sincerely attached to it, they demand a serious and impartial examination. Now, these impossibilities, reduced by analysis to their simple expression, are confined to three.

In the first place, it is said that *the remedy would be worse than the evil; for, to banish the great models of pagan antiquity would be to thrust the world back into the literary barbarism from which the "Renaissance" has rescued it.*

In the second place, it is said that *the remedy is impossible, seeing the "baccalaureate college degree" exacts a knowledge of the profane authors;* and most parents desire their sons to obtain the title of bachelor, in order that they may occupy a position in society, though this be at the risk of losing their claim to the title of Christian.

In the third place, we are told that *the remedy proposed, were it applicable, would be inefficacious, seeing that even with Christian classics in hand, the professor will always have it in his power to make pagan pupils, if he is so disposed.*

Let us examine in detail each of these objections. To substitute Christian for pagan classics is a remedy worse than the evil, it is said; yet the evil is very great, almost as great as it can possibly be. Around us all is tottering, all is in ruins: from head to foot society is nothing but a wound. The doctors called in to heal it declare themselves unequal to the task: many look upon society already in its death agony, and daily expect it to expire under the convulsions of a new struggle. This is the

evil; it is said the remedy is still worse! Why so? let us ask. Because, it is replied, it were better for society to perish amidst the enlightenment of a glorious civilization than to fall back into barbarism, which in itself is death, and that too of a most shameful kind. And to banish from education the great models of pagan antiquity would be to lead the world back into the barbarism from which the *Renaissance* has rescued it! Such, then, is the first reason, in all its force, which is opposed to the return of the Christian classics.

We have the misfortune to think quite the contrary: we maintain that the Christian classics do not lead back to barbarism, neither as to literature nor morals; we maintain that the barbarism from which it is pretended the *Renaissance* rescued Europe is a mere chimera, and that the restoration of letters and the arts is anterior to the introduction of paganism into education.

It is true that many well-meaning persons are to be met with in the present times, who repeat, as an axiom, that the ages anterior to the *Renaissance* were ages of barbarism, as to morals, laws, civil and political institutions, and still more so in literature and the arts. Doubtless these persons understand what they say; as for ourselves, who do not at all comprehend it, we ask permission to explain, word by word, their terrible proposition.

The darkness of barbarism follows that of error, of which it is the result. On the contrary, the light of civilization reigns where light and truth are to be found. Truth is Christianity. In order to know whether the Middle Ages were barbarous, it suffices to know whether Christianity was unknown in those ages; whether it was in any way applied to society; or even whether it was less known and less applied than it is at the present time. We wait a reply.

We will now ask how it is that the Christian classics lead back to barbarism? We may receive, for answer, that it makes us forget our native language, seeing that we cannot know any European tongue perfectly without knowing the Latin, from which all our modern languages are taken. A multitude of persons, more particularly those of the opposite sex, find such a reason highly flattering — indeed it is too absolute to be true. We will, however, take it in all its extent; but let us be thoroughly understood: there are two kinds of Latin, which, if it were necessary, we could readily prove. Now it is well known that it is from the Christian, and by no means from the pagan, Latin that our modern languages are derived.

It may be added that the Christian classics will lead us back to barbarism because the Latin of the age of Augustus, and the Greek of that of Pericles, ceasing to be known, our access to solid erudition

would be closed. A little later you will see that the Christian classics are far from causing the pagan tongues to be forgotten. For the present we will confine ourselves to pointing out the fact that the pagan Latin is not so necessary to erudition as is generally thought. What is it that makes up the treasures of the science of the public and private law of the nations of Europe, the civil and the canon law, of theology, of history, of geology, of the natural sciences in general, and of mathematics, if not the works written in Christian Latin, or in the modern languages? And what would be known of all this after reading the authors of the period of Augustus and Pericles?

Will any one be found after this to insist that the Christian classics lead to the loss of the good taste we owe to the *Renaissance*? We contend that a taste for the *beautiful* grows out of a knowledge of the *true*. Those who would insist on the contrary must prove that the knowledge of truth was less perfect before the *Renaissance* than it has been since. What are those truths which have been made better known by the *Renaissance*? Show in what manner it has developed the perception of the beautiful. Truly, we do not go back sixty years. The reproach of barbarism, so often pronounced against the Christian ages, is no longer admitted by all; it is acknowledged now that there was much that was noble and beautiful in the moral, scientific, social, and artistic order, anterior to the invasion of paganism. During the last quarter of a century, many prejudices have disappeared; there is one point, however, upon which they remain almost intact, and this is with respect to the literature before the *Renaissance*. As this point is the chief motive, or more correctly, the most ordinary pretext advanced for maintaining paganism in education, it demands a separate examination.

What was long said of Catholic architecture, that it was the type of bad taste and barbarism, that it was no more worthy to be compared with the Greek and Roman architecture, than Lucan with Virgil, or Seneca the tragedian to Sophocles; is still said with respect to the literature of the Christian ages. The Christian literature of those times continues to be the object of disdain; those who entertain this feeling almost blush to find it still on the lips of the Church, and are surprised that persons can be found sufficiently deprived of good sense as to think it comparable to the literature of the pagan times. In a word, Fenelon, Maffei, Scaliger, and a crowd of others, have left numerous heirs of their exclusive admiration of pagan literature, and their profound pity for that which is Christian.¹

¹ In his letter on eloquence, Fenelon, the *excellent* Fenelon, is not afraid to say, that in his time Europe was only *emerging from barbarism*: p. 399. This letter is a pompous

Amongst a thousand examples, we will confine ourselves to one which is a perfect *résumé* of the rest. What follows was published in 1850, by a man of high intelligence, solid learning, and of a venerable character. "The Hymnarium of the Paris breviary cannot be too much admired; it is written in the purest Latin idiom of the epoch of Augustus; it is of the lyric kind in all its beauty, in all its pomp, in all its *éclat*; the metaphor is just, full of energy, and delicate; the movements of the soul are natural, touching, sublime, and pious: in a word, it is most worthy of the truth descended from Heaven. Decency of public worship demanded this reform, such as has been made more particularly in our own days, when it is so important that the lettered, the indifferent, or the impious, as well as the college-lad, should find nothing contemptible in the language of the liturgy that is put into his mouth."

Here we have the Christian language and the poetry, anterior to the *Renaissance*, treated as Gothic architecture was formerly treated. In spite of the severity of this judgment, or rather on account of this severity, the worthy author of these lines will permit us to discuss the question, and to draw from himself his own condemnation.

A faithful guardian of one of our finest cathedrals, he is, as we are aware, an enlightened admirer of the Gothic art, and as such would justly look upon the man as an ignoramus and a Vandal who should say to him, "The substitution of the Greek and Roman architecture for the Gothic is *a reform which the decency of public worship required*; the artistic style of the age of Augustus and Pericles is *most worthy of the truth descended from Heaven*." He will permit us to establish, first, that the term *barbarism* should no more be applied to Christian literature than to Christian architecture, and *that there is nothing for men of letters, those who are indifferent, or the impious, as well as the college-lad, to condemn in the language of the liturgy they put upon his lips*; secondly, that the Latin idiom did not recover its purity in the *Renaissance* of the pagan classics, but, on the contrary, that it has lost it, and will in time lose itself.

To begin, then, good sense alone rejects, *à priori*, the arguments of the partisans of the *Renaissance*. Before any discussion, it obliges every thinking man to say with the illustrious bishop of Langres, "We were still on the college benches when we asked ourselves how it was that the spirit of falsehood alone had received the privilege of graceful language; and when in the course of time we ourselves in turn were appointed to

panegyric on the eloquence, the poetry, the tragedy, and the comedy of the pagan epoch, as the exclusive type of the beautiful.

teach others the art of speaking well, which, considered in its source, is a marvelous emanation from the Word of God, we refused to believe that the Word made Flesh, which had been pleased to impart this gift to its enemies, as is done with many of the divine gifts, had refused it to the Church purchased by the Son of God, and to which he is so intimately united as, according to St. John, to be its spouse.

“Such were our thoughts at an epoch of our life when, under the influence of prejudices formed at an early age, we could not yet appreciate the literary treasures of the Church, which indeed we scarcely knew.

“But, in proportion as we rose above our own convictions, and have examined with a calm and conscientious impartiality the writings of our doctors and fathers of the faith, our astonishment has changed its object. We have asked ourselves, not as before, how it was the Church of God did not possess the high qualities of language, as well as the churches of Satan, for we had under our eyes proofs to the contrary; but how it happened that in the bosom of Christianity the numerous *chefs-d’œuvre* of Christian literature had been set aside with scorn, to study, to admire, and, humanly speaking, to adore the literary works of paganism.

“These latter, without doubt, have their superiority, and, as we have said, the gift of speaking and writing as bestowed in common to all the children of men by Him who causes the sun to shine on the wicked as well as on the good, who makes the rain to fall on the lands of the sinner and the just. But what we cannot admit is that this precious gift is the privilege of error; for the consolation of our faith, we know, and to acquit our conscience we now declare, that it is not so.”²

Before entering upon our examination, we have therefore the right to reject the appellation of barbarism as applied to Christian literature; for it is absurd, not to say more, to admit that elegance of language is the exclusive privilege of error.

But we will proceed further, and establish a fundamental distinction, which is always overlooked by the partisans of pagan literature, but which, however, will destroy all their sophisms. The Latin tongue has been spoken by two societies diametrically opposed to each other — the pagan and the Christian societies. As there is, by the admission of all, a pagan and a Christian philosophy; a pagan and a Christian architecture; a pagan and a Christian school of painting, of sculpture, of working in gold and silver, of poetry, of eloquence, so also there is a pagan and a Christian Latin.

² Letter to the superior and professors of his minor seminary.

Each of these two have their distinctive characteristics and advantages. Under the pencil or the chisel of the great masters of Italy and Greece, the pagan art interprets well the pagan idea and feeling, so in the mouth of Titus Livius or Cicero, or from the pen of Virgil or Horace, the pagan Latin interprets perfectly the pagan sentiment. Like the society, of which it is the faithful expression, this language is, particularly in the age of Augustus, polite, elegant, and cold, sometimes majestic, and more commonly imperious and haughty. Uction is wanting, because charity is wanting to society. The exclusive organ of the passions, and of interests purely natural, it is profoundly sensual. All that order of ideas, of virtues, and of sentiments, born of Christianity, remain unexpressed by it. Thus, naturalism, sensualism, egotism, and poverty as to matter and variety, elegance and dryness as to form, inversion and rigor in the contexture, are the characteristics which distinguish pagan Latin.

Christian Latin, which is the expression of an entirely different society, offers characteristics diametrically opposed. Pure spiritualism, and inexhaustible richness in matter, and simplicity, sweetness, unction, flexibility, and clearness in form, with logical order, particularly as to contexture, — such are some of its qualities. It will be seen that these two languages differ as much from each other as the two societies of which they are the expression.³

Thus, it is evidently neither more possible nor more absurd to wish to make pagan Latin the interpreter of Christianity than to make Christian Latin the organ of paganism. In an artistic point of view, it is like building a Gothic cathedral to the honor of Jupiter, or to make use of the temples of Pæstum for Christian processions.

Thus, it was the Fathers of the Church, who were men of good sense and of genius, who made use of the Latin idiom in composing a new language fitted to give a perfect interpretation of the ideas, the sentiments, and the customs of Christianity; and so it was the Christian architects, sculptors, painters, and workers in gold and silver, seeing in the pagan art certain first principles and rules, adopted and modified them under the inspiration of the faith, so as to form elements of an art

³ Latina *Christianæ Ecclesiæ* lingua a lingua Latina *ethnorum*, quam *classicam* vocant, toto cœlo discrepat. Latinitas enim *ethnica*, *transpositivus* ille sermo est, totusque in verborum sono, elegantia, atque delectu positus, quem Augusti Cæsaris seculo potissimum Romani scriptores adhibuerunt. Latinitas *Christiana* vero, est sermo ille, ordine, claritate, et rerum præcipue sententiarumque gravitate longe præstantissimus, quem Ecclesiæ Latinæ Patres, data opera, confinxerunt, ut eo *Christianæ religionis* mysteria, dogmata, leges, ritus commode atque perlucide enuntiari et exponi possunt. — *De Oper. SS. Eccl. PP. in Litterar. Instit. adhib.* p. 49.

exclusively Catholic. It was not in ignorance of the pagan Latin that the Christian Latin was composed.

Who dare to say that St. Cyprian, for instance, was ignorant of pagan literature, since he taught pagan eloquence at Carthage in a most distinguished manner long before his conversion? Or St. Jerome, so fond of Cicero and Plautus that nothing less than a punishment from God could cure his passion; or St. Augustine, who, before becoming a disciple of the Gospel, had long been a follower of Cicero, of Virgil, and of Terence, and for many years was professor of rhetoric at Rome and Milan? Certain it is, that, if they had chosen, no one could have spoken or written the Latin of the age of Augustus more correctly than these immortal men. If they did not do so, it is not because they were unable, but because they would not; and they would not, because they understood that there must be a new language for a new society. On this point we have the incontestable evidence of St. Augustine himself.⁴

Let it not be thought that, in rejecting and pruning from the Latin idiom all that softness and superfluity of form, of measure and sound, that the founders of the Christian Latin have neglected propriety and the choice of terms, or even elegance and number. On the contrary, they gave particular care to all this as, St. Augustine again bears witness.⁵ But this propriety and choice of words, this elegance, this number, which they sought was appropriate to the Christian Latin, the principal object of which is not to flatter the senses, but to express truth clearly, strongly, and nobly. As with the former, we owe this new secret to the great bishop of Hippo.⁶

⁴ In populo *gravi*, de quo dictum est Deo: *In populo gravi laudabo te* (Ps. xxxiv.), nec illa suavitas delectabilis est, qua non quidem iniqua dicuntur, *sed exigua et fragilia vano spumeo verborum ambitu* ornantur, quali nec magna atque stabilia decenter et graviter ornarentur. Est tale aliquid in epistola beatissimi Cypriani, quod ideo puto vel accidisse, vol consulto factum esse, *ut sciretur a posteris* quam linguam doctrinæ Christianæ sanitas ab ista redundantia revocaverit, et ad *eloquentiam graviorern modestioremque* restrinxerit; qualis in ejus consequentibus litteris secure amatur, religiose appetitur, sed difficillime impletur. Ait ergo quodam loco: "Petamus hanc sedem: dant secessum vicina secreta; ubi dum erratici palmitum lapsus pendulis nexibus per arundines bajulas repunt, viteam porticum frondea tecta *fecerunt*." — *Epist. i. ad Donat.* Non dicuntur ista nisi mirabiliter affluentissima fecunditate facundiæ, sed profusione nimia gravitati displicent. Qui vero hæc amant (profani rhetores), profecto eos qui non ita dicunt, sed castigatius eloquuntur (Ecclesiæ Patres et Doctores), non posse ita eloqui existimant, non *judicio ista devitare*. Quapropter iste vir sanctus et *posse* se ostendit sic dicere, quia dixit alicubi; *et nolle*, quoniam postmodum, nusquam. — S. Aug. *Opp.* tom. iii. part. 1, p. 129; *De Doctr. Christ.* lib. iv. c. 14, n. 31; Paris edition.

⁵ Ego autem in meo eloquio, quantum modeste fieri arbitror, non prætermitto istos numeros clausularum . . . — *Ib.* c. xx. n. 41.

⁶ In ipso etiam sermone malit (doctor Christianus) rebus placere, quam *verbis*; nec

Thus, the expressions and terms are known to both languages; but the seal, the genius, the order, and the signification of a great many words are totally different. This difference in the two idioms is so great, that many who are very distinguished scholars in the pagan, are not at all so in the Christian Latin; and he who flatters himself upon imitating Cicero in prose, and Horace in verse, is unable to write a discourse in the style of St. Leo or St. Gregory, or a hymn after the manner of St. Ambrose or St. Thomas. Experience proves this to be the fact. It is in vain for a man, so to speak, to appropriate to himself the style of the profane authors, and be conversant with the Latin of the age of Augustus; if he does not study deeply the princes of Christian Latin, he will find himself embarrassed, and even incapable of writing or speaking with propriety of the dogmas or discipline, or, in a word, of Christian things. His composition may be distinguished for its elegance and the choice of words it displays, as well as for the measure of its phrases, but it will want precision, gravity, and clearness; it will be empty, poor, and often ridiculous.

From the sixteenth century this serious defect has been foreseen. It had even been feared, alas! not without reason, that pagan language would introduce pagan ideas and errors. "It is from the Christian authors," says the celebrated Father Possevin, "that children should learn, not only the holy doctrine, but also the manner of expression with propriety and truth. He who would write or reason upon Christian things solely in the language of the age of Augustus will commit serious errors, will give religion a pagan physiognomy, will constantly fall into impropriety of expression, vanity of thought, and even into inexactitude of belief, such as may open the door to heresy. Hence it is we have so many sad examples in Lorenzo Valla and in Erasmus, who have been justly called, by men of great penetration, 'the precursors of Luther.'" ⁷

æstimet dici melius, nisi quod dicitur verius; *nec doctor verbis serviat, sed verba doctori*. Hoc est enim quod apostolus ait: "Non in sapientia verbi, ut non evacuetur crux Christi." — I Cor. i. Ad hoc valet etiam quod ait ad Timotheum: "Noli verbis contendere." — 2 Tim. ii. Neque enim hoc ideo dictum est, ut adversariis oppugnantibus veritatem, nihil nos pro veritate dicamus. Nam ubi erit quod, cum ostenderit, qualis esse episcopus debeat, ait, inter cætera: "Ut potens sit in doctrina sana qui contradicunt arguere?" — Ib. Verbis enim contendere est, non curare quomodo error veritate vincatur; sed quomodo tua dictio dictioni præferatur alterius. Porro, qui non verbis contendit, sive temperate, sive granditer dicat; id agit verbis ut *veritas pateat, veritas placeat, veritas moveat*. Sicut autem, cujus pulchrum corpus, et deformis esset animus, magis dolendus est, quam si deforme haberet et corpus; ita qui eloquenter quæ falsa sunt dicunt, magis miserandi sunt, quam si talia deformiter dicerent. — Ib. c. xxviii. n. 61.

⁷ Chi vuole oscrivere o ragionare delle cose Cristiane con Cicerone solo, o con altri etnici incore in perniciosissimi errori, fa somigliante la religione nostra a quella degli

In proof of what we advance, we can add the testimony of a man known throughout Europe for his erudition in Latin literature. Monsignor Laureani, keeper of the Vatican library, whose works, both in prose and verse, are rich, elegant, and delightful, made the following avowal: —“The study of Cicero” (with whom we may say he identified himself) “was useless, or almost useless, to me in treating upon Christian subjects. At first I found myself much embarrassed to write upon religious matters. I then turned my attention to the study of the works of St. Leo, in the assiduous reading of which I found the true language of the Church, with its elegance, form, and clearness. From that time I have been able to dissert without difficulty on ecclesiastical matters.”⁸ The learned prelate might have added that he drew from this source that inimitable elegance of language for which he is so highly distinguished.

From all this we must conclude that there are two languages in Latin, perfectly distinct from each other; and also, that though we may draw a comparison between two pagan authors, Cicero and Quintilian, for example, it is absurd to compare a Christian with a pagan author, as, for instance, Cicero with St. Ambrose, or Quintilian with St. Augustine, the writers of the age of Augustus with those of the thirteenth century. In fact, the one speaks pagan, the other Christian, Latin. Now, these two languages differ essentially as to form, the number of the periods, the order of syntax, and even in the sense of the words.

“How is it,” exclaims the learned bishop already cited, “that every author of eminence is allowed his peculiar style, and yet the Church of God is not to have hers! Does not the phrase of Titus Livius differ considerably from that of Tacitus? And has not the poetry of Horace a physiognomy very different from that of Virgil? Who has ever thought of accusing one of bad taste merely because it does not resemble the other? Yet this is what has been done, both individually and collectively, with regard to Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory, Basil, and Chrysostom. In some, the phraseology of Cicero has been sought and found wanting; in others, the forms of Demosthenes; from this it has been concluded that these authors were of a degenerate taste, without considering that, in their peculiar manner of writing, beauties of a superior, of a purer order might be found. But how long is it that the style of a writer has become an absolute law in

etnici . . . trabocca in infiniti inconvenienti d' improprietà nella lingua, di vanità nei concetti, e non di rado nel credere in cose che aprono la porte all' eresce, siccome più d'una volta caddero Lorenzo Valla ed Erasmo, i quali non senza cagione da persone di senno e di dottrina furon chiamati precursori di Lutero. — *Ragion.* p. 10.

⁸ *De Oper. SS. Eccl. Patr. in Litterar. etc.* p. 52.

literature? Several authors are usually given to be studied at the same time, although of various styles; and why this, if not in order that the taste may be formed, and each talent determined by this very comparison? Why, then, is this spirit of unfairness, that has prevented, for three hundred years, the same rule being applied to the holy Church which is so generally and naturally applied elsewhere?"⁹

The existence of two languages in Latin being established, we reject as an odious slander the denomination of *base Latinity* employed to designate the idiom of the Church, and with still greater reason we refuse to admit the designation of barbarism as applied to the Christian Latin: cultivated by the first geniuses of the West, this language is equally suited to prose and verse. Christian poetry numbers amongst its masters, besides St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Fulgentius, Innocent III, St. Bonaventura, and St. Thomas. As to the prose, it received all its perfection from St. Leo and St. Gregory, but more particularly the latter. It was admirably spoken by the councils and by the great men of the Middle Ages, and even earlier, such as St. Eucher, St. Maximus, Vincent of Lerins, St. Peter Chrysologus, St. Prosper, St. Fulgentius, Boëtius Cassiodorus, St. Isidore, St. Ildephonsus, Bede, Rabanus, Haymon, St. Bernardin of Siena, St. Antony of Padua, St. Peter Damian, St. Anselm, St. Bruno, St. Bernard, Hugh and Richard de Saint Victor, Peter de Blois, Albertus Magnus, St. Bonaventura, St. Thomas, and a number of others, with whom modern times have nothing to compare; and it continues to be spoken and written with great perfection in the Roman congregations and in the official acts of the Holy See.

Such is the language that has been designated as barbarous, as if all these immortal men, who, during so many ages, knew so well how to vest their thoughts in artistic forms, had been struck powerless when it became necessary to express them in words! Affirmation is not enough, we must be furnished with proofs. Let us see the scientific and literary titles of those who dare to cast insult in the face of the Catholic Church. Without this, those who permit themselves to qualify as barbarous the Latin of the Gospel, of St. Thomas, and of St. Bernard, which they have probably never read; of St. Thomas à Kempis, and so many others, whose style offers qualities almost divine, only prove themselves ignorant barbarians, similar to those who formerly looked upon our master-pieces of architecture, whose inimitable perfection is now contested by no man of taste, as works of barbarism.

⁹ Letter to the superior of the minor seminary.

In examining the subject intrinsically and apart from external evidence, we are in a still better position to repulse the contempt applied to the Latin of the Church. The question is, not whether or no this language is that of the age of Augustus, but whether it is less perfect; in other terms, whether the Christian Latin expresses the ideas, the sentiments, and the matters connected with Christianity, less perfectly than the pagan Latin expresses the ideas, the sentiments, and the matters connected with paganism? If, for instance, the supernatural is less eloquent, noble, rich, sublime, simple, or clear in the mouth of St. Leo, St. Gregory, St. Bernard, or St. Thomas, than the natural is in that of Titus Livius, Quintus Curtius, or Cicero? Who can come furnished with proof and answer in the affirmative? So far for the relative perfection of the one and the other; as to their absolute perfection, this is what we have to consider: that beauty consists in the splendor of truth; that this radiation of truth manifests itself in the arts and in words; that the more a people or a society is imbued with truth, the more beautiful is its style, its art, and its language. This established, it is sufficient in order to decide which of the languages has the superiority, to reply to this question: Does Christianity possess more truth than paganism?

CHAPTER XXVII.
CONTINUATION.

CHRISTIAN Latin is not more barbarous than Christian architecture, painting, or in fact than Christian art in general: this must not be forgotten. To propose to the world, then, as models for its classics, such authors as were followed during the Middle Ages in speaking, is no more calculated to carry it back into literary barbarism than proposing Christian types in art is taking it back into artistic barbarism. Would our youths be thought barbarous with respect to Latin, were they to speak the idiom of St. Leo, St. Gregory, St. Bernard, and St. Thomas, in all its purity? Doubtless they would be as much so as our painters who produced pictures, such as those of the blessed Angelico di Fiesole, or as our architects who built cathedrals, such as Rheims and Cologne. This fear of barbarism is then but a chimera, and, therefore, in a point of view purely literary, modern nations have no need to maintain the reign of paganism in education.

We will go further, and say that the love of Latin and Greek calls upon them to renew, without delay, the chain that was broken in the fifteenth century, and to re-establish the reign of Christian literature in the instruction of youth. This assertion places us in diametrical opposition to those who pretend that the restoration of Latin literature in Europe dates from the sixteenth century. We affirm, on the contrary, not only that *this restoration was anterior to what is called the "Renaissance,"* but also, that *that epoch was the commencement of the decadence and corruption of the Latin tongue,* as it is the epoch and the cause of the decadence in art. Such is the double proposition now to be established in order to do complete justice to the first objection.

During the whole course of the Middle Ages, the classics in use were exclusively *Christian*; but it is completely false to suppose that this was the cause of the degeneration and corruption of Latin literature, any more than it was of the arts and sciences. It is therefore equally false that all these things emerged from barbarism, under the influence of paganism in the sixteenth century. Like pagan art, pagan Latin followed the movement of the pagan society, of which it was the expression; it

grew up and fell with it, as the form falls with the principle that inspires and supports it.

Thus, scarcely had Augustus descended into the tomb, when, under Tiberius, although there were as yet no Christian classics, the Latin language began to change. The golden age was soon followed by the age of silver, which was not long in giving place to the iron age: all our literary monuments show this. If, then, in spite of the most distinguished masters, Quintilian amongst others, letters and the arts declined in the bosom of paganism, we repeat, it must not be attributed to the use of Christian books, nor to the influence of Christianity. It is to the vicissitudes of the empire, more particularly to its intestine divisions, to its contact with barbarous nations, to their incursions and sojourn in the republic, but above all, to the general corruption of morals, which sooner or later always leads to this result, that must be attributed the corruption of literature and the arts.

Then, when the barbarians, become masters of the old world, had covered the soil with ruins, pillaged the cities, destroyed the schools, and burned the libraries, literature and the arts, as a natural consequence, almost disappeared. Here again it is not to the Christian classics, nor to the influence of Christianity, that must be imputed the barbarism into which literature and the arts and sciences fell. Far from it; for if some precious gem was preserved, we owe it to Christianity. Calm restored, the Church saw that her mission was no more to restore pagan Latin than to restore paganism itself. Her first care was, as we have already hinted, to create a new world with the broken elements of paganism, and the still unquarried materials of barbarism. She put her hand to the work, certain that the new world would be able, in time, to create a new language for herself. This took place, and we think we have proved that this new language, the organ of the Christian society, was at least as perfect as the ancient language, the organ of the pagan society.

It is incorrect, then, to suppose that the Latin tongue and the arts and sciences were restored in Europe by the influence of the pagan classics. As is well known, paganism in education only dates from the end of the fifteenth century. Now, more than three hundred years before this period, literature, the sciences and the arts had been restored, nay more, had been raised to the highest degree of perfection; and we boldly assert that there is not a single branch of science or of art that had not already produced *chefs-d'œuvre* such as have never been surpassed. Since the opportunity presents itself, we may be allowed to collect the scattered traits to be found in this work, and show at once the magnificent reality and the wonderful secret of this restoration, so often denied by some, and ill-understood by others.

We will start from this incontestable principle: the civilization of societies neither commences by the cultivation of letters and arts, nor by the construction of theaters, nor by elegance of dress, nor by the conveniences of material life. Its origin and foundation is in good morals, and good morals have for their basis the exact knowledge and the faithful practice of the duties of religion, according to Scripture: — *Initium sapientiæ timor Domini*. In fact, the true and the just are the double foundation of societies, the *beautiful* is but the radiation. It is then only after having been strongly nourished with these substantial aliments that society can enter upon the research of the beautiful, that is to say, the study of literature and the arts. This is according to reason and logic.

Such was the intellectual march followed in the Middle Ages by Christian nations. After the first crusades, which greatly contributed to the progress of the human mind, the Church eagerly took advantage of the calm enjoyed by Europe. Free to devote herself, according to the holy canons, to the study of the sciences, the great men amongst the clergy and monastic orders concentrated their talents with wonderful accord on the religious and moral sciences. Thanks to their efforts, these elevated sciences, strengthened in their base, explained and logically exposed in all their bearings, took a new and extensive development. Whilst in our days all human activity is concentrated on the physical world, the intellectual movement of that grand epoch turned entirely towards religious and metaphysical speculations. Hence, the numerous universities called into existence by the vivifying breath of the Church were but theological schools in the beginning. To these magnificent studies, St. Anselm gave the *form*, which was dialectic; Peter Lombard, better known under the name of *Master of the Sentences*, furnished the *groundwork*, which he collected with great wisdom from the writings of the Holy Fathers; their extension was the work of Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas and St. Bonaventura who brought them to perfection.

Scarcely had divine science been established on a solid foundation when philosophy was placed on a footing equally sure. Aristotelian in form, but Christian in object, in principle, in doctrine, and in method, it developed itself in all its magnificence in the *Summa* of St. Thomas. Here theology and philosophy go hand in hand and, mutually assisting each other, form a union that has called forth the admiration of six centuries. This is the most beautiful work ever produced by human intelligence; it is angelic, almost divine; it marks the highest limit of genius, is a well of science, a treasury of truths, a refutation of errors, a vast exposition of the Christian religion, one of the strongest bulwarks

of the Church, and the only work judged worthy, by the Fathers of the Council of Trent, to appear beside the Gospel in the midst of their august assemblies, to solve the difficulties and terminate the controversies that might arise in the definition of Catholic dogmas.

From theology, that is to say, from the perfect knowledge of the divine law, and the supernatural relations of man with God, sprang the science of human laws, that is to say, of the relations of men with each other. In studying the monuments, one is filled with astonishment to see the extent of the knowledge of the law, whether divine, human, natural, positive, ecclesiastic, civil, or political, attained at this epoch.

It must not be supposed, however, that the higher branches of science, raised, as they should be, to the place of honor in the esteem of our ancestors, exclusively absorbed their attention. Religion and society secured against attack, men of high intelligence turned their attention to the physical world, in order to find out the properties of bodies, and employ them in the service of man. Then it was that were discovered those three things, which, as has been said, have changed the condition, the manners, and customs of the universe: printing, gunpowder, and the compass. Yes, we owe these three wonders, of which we are so proud, but which are too frequently abused, to those ages which modern barbarians do not fear to call barbarous. In the order of physics, progress did not, however, rest here. Mathematics, geography, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, in a word, all the natural sciences, burst forth with a splendor that enlightened the road for future ages. These sciences were publicly taught by the most talented masters to thousands of young minds; from this fact those illustrious schools received their present name of *universities*.

With this universal restoration of the sciences, the restoration of literature and arts kept pace. The same century which produced St. Thomas, the Angelic Doctor, the Prince of Theologians, produced Dante, the divine, the king of poets. For elevation of subject, magnificence of style, vigor of expression, and harmony of verse, his *Divine Commedia* leaves far in arrear all the poetic works of the pagans. The world was still under the influence of this marvelous poetry when the voice of Francesco Petrarch made itself heard. His harmonious chants did not excite less admiration than the elevated composition of Dante. Nothing can be more powerful than the verse of Dante, nor sweeter than that of Petrarch; in both, the poetry is sublime. Each is so perfect in his particular style, that he surpasses, or at least equals, all the poets who preceded or have followed.¹

¹ We will here remark, with the most judicious critics, that the weakest parts of these

Eloquence was scarcely to be found beyond the precincts of the Church. Ever since the government of the Roman empire had become the privilege of a single individual, and the people had no longer been called upon to give their suffrage in the public assemblies, *popular* eloquence had degenerated: its fall dates from the Cæsars. It was the same with the eloquence of the *bar*. The wisdom of the Church had established in the Christian nations those forms of judgment, according to which the lives and fortunes of individuals were no longer decided under the impression of the address of the counsel, on the instant, and, as it were, by surprise, but after a slow and careful examination of the opposing parties. This kind of eloquence, which was by no means necessary, and was, indeed, sometimes dangerous, had fallen into disuse for ages. The eloquence of the *pulpit*, almost the only eloquence then in practice, flourished marvelously. After ages have not seen oratory exercise the wonderful empire of St. Bernard, St. Antony of Padua, William of Paris, St. Bonaventura, John Taulerus, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Laurence Justinian, St. Bernard of Siena, and many others, whose words regulated the affairs of the people and the differences of kings.

As the study of the sciences leads to that of letters, so this latter is followed by the cultivation of the arts. Letters and the arts express the ideas, the belief and the manners of a people by *words* and *signs*; but as thought more easily expresses itself by words than by statues and pictures, the artist only comes in the suite of poets and orators. Thus, the arts receive their impulse from literature, as literature receives its impetus from the higher sciences. The ages anterior to the *Renaissance* eloquently confirm this induction.

At this epoch the ardent study of all kinds of literature led to the high cultivation of the arts. Painting, restored by Cimabue in the same century in which St. Thomas and Dante lived, made a wonderful progress under the influence of Giotto, the disciple of Cimabue, — a man worthy of the praises of Dante and Petrarch. In this same century, the fourteenth, Pisani surrounded it with new glory, and at the beginning of the following century the blessed Angelico raised it to perfection. According to the testimony of Michael Angelo himself, it was in Heaven that he found the types of his inimitable faces. With painting, sculpture and architecture rapidly rose to the highest degree of glory: indeed, Giotto and Pisani were at the same time painters and architects.

authors are precisely those where they have attempted to mingle paganism and Christianity. This is the *danger* also of some of Petrarch's works.

Yes, and we do not say it without a malicious pleasure, it was during these ages, so much cried down, that were built those churches, cathedrals, and *duomos*, where marble, worked with infinite delicacy, mingled its varied hues with the magnificence of painting; where stone and granite, under the chisel of the sculptor, assumed the most graceful, the most delicate forms, with the same ease as clay in the hands of the potter; where chemistry, giving up its secrets, unknown before and after, hung the vast windows of our venerable basilicas with purple, gold, and azure: barbarous ages! in which innumerable monuments, still unrivaled, raised Christian art in all its purity to perfection.

We must honor in the same century, not only the other incomparable artists, such as Antony of Messina, the inventor of oil painting, Donatelli, Alberti, Verrochio, master of Leonardo da Vinci and of Perugino, but Leonardo da Vinci himself, Perugino, Bramante, Raphael, and Michael Angelo; for although these artists died in the sixteenth century, they began to distinguish themselves in the fifteenth; and they owe to the *Christian school*, founded in the thirteenth century, the ideas and principles which have acquired for them immortal glory. To cite only a single proof; it is a well-known fact that Michael Angelo and Raphael, those princes of painting, constantly nourished their minds, the first on Dante, the second on Petrarch, and thus Michael Angelo reproduced the vigorous style of Dante, and Raphael the charming and graceful style of Petrarch.

It is worthy of our most serious attention that all those immortal men who, from the eleventh to the end of the fifteenth century, raised the sciences, literature, and the arts to so high a degree of perfection, drew their principles, their ideas, their rules, and their inspirations from Christianity. What the star was to the angels, the torch of faith was to them. By its light alone they were enabled to traverse surely and easily the glorious career open to their genius. The ages of faith have another title to glory, in having created a new science, a new art, exclusively Christian and appropriate to Christian nations, instead of the miserable tracing made by after ages of pagan art and science.

It was the same with respect to literature, for which we owe new homage to the Ages of Faith. It is evident that the three most beautiful languages of Europe, and, indeed, of the world, French, Italian, and Spanish, owe their origin to the Latin tongue. But it is generally overlooked altogether, that these languages are all the offspring of Christian, and in no way descended from pagan, Latin. They breathe the style of St. Gregory and St. Leo, and not that of Cicero. These languages are marked by the same division of periods, display the same antipathy to vain abundance in words, and are characterized by the same clear

and simple syntax;² we also find the same choice, agreeable, serious style, the same acceptation for a mass of words — an acceptation new and entirely Christian; the same chaste and moderate use of ornament; the same natural and unaffected mode as to number. Thus, it is that in reading these languages we are reminded so strongly of St. Jerome in his sacred translations, or St. Gregory, Bede, St. Peter Damian, St. Bernard, St. Thomas, and St. Bonaventura; and, indeed, there is no illusion in this, for from these pure and fruitful sources are taken the genius and the syntax of our magnificent idioms, as well as most of our words: *vocabula manant parce detorta*.

Poetry has the same origin, for it was neither in Homer, in Horace, or in Pindar, but in holy books, that the fathers of French, Italian, and Spanish poetry sought their sublime ideas, their style, elocution, and plan. They did not ask inspiration from *Delius vates*, but from the faith. Everything in our modern poetry indicates a Christian origin. Differing from the pagan, this poetry does not measure its verses either by feet or the length of the syllables, but by number and rhyme. Such is, as is well known, the character peculiar to the poetry of St. Gregory, St. Bonaventura, St. Thomas, and the other Latin poets of our Ages of Faith. The rhythm invented by them is still that of modern poetry, particularly Italian.

Born of Christian literature and ideas, the fine arts took the Christian stamp in all its purity. We find it not only in the choice of subjects, but in the *motive*, the style, the kind of beauties, in the principle and form of their works. This is everywhere seen in the style of architecture called *Gothic*. There are still some persons to be found who blame it; they say that by the boldness, or rather the temerity, of its conceptions, it fatigues the eye rather than pleases it, and makes a painful impression on the soul, which it throws into a kind of stupor. It handles stone with such freedom, and heals difficulties with such audacity, that one is at a loss to explain its caprices.

Ignorance alone can reason thus with respect to Gothic architecture; such language marks a vulgar mind, that only recognizes in art the prosaic pleasure of the senses, which is no more the end of art than imagination alone makes up the perfect man. It is not surprising that Greek and Roman temples enjoy the exclusive privilege of exciting the admiration of judges such as these. Monuments of this style discover at first sight the secret of their harmony, they leave nothing to the imagination, and do not rise beyond the senses and the most ordinary

² Hence we have the *que* always expressed in our modern languages, but almost always *suppressed* in pagan Latin.

capacity of the soul; their nakedness and the simplicity of their ornaments spare all effort, all study, on the part of the spectator, and enable his imagination and his eyes to repose tranquilly on vain contemplation.

These edifices are of a beauty purely sensible, and in no way intellectually or morally so. They please, but they are not impressive; they divert the eye and the imagination, but they do not raise the soul above the base regions of sensible life; they excite no divine movement; they awaken no recollection of the supernatural world. On the contrary, the general aspect of their forms, their architectural lines, forcibly turn our regards towards Earth; they only speak a terrestrial language, and excite in man but thoughts and desires of Earth.

How could it be otherwise? Pagan temples were not built to honor the true God, nor to reform the morals of man, but rather to excite and flatter his passions. The Greek or Roman never experienced a single movement of divine inspiration under his temple. That these buildings unite all the conditions of sensible beauty we are willing to admit, but they never have, and never can, be eloquent interpreters of the supernatural world, of its sublime mysteries, its ravishing beauties, or its divine splendors.

This is the glorious privilege of Gothic churches: their towers, tapering upwards, seem to seek and to attain Heaven; their pointed arches, their bold and gigantic proportions, lead the eye and the thought heavenward: what do they announce, if not the absolute triumph of the genius of man over matter, and the sublime efforts of his soul to raise itself above the corporeal world? And this stone, this marble, softened under the chisel, and losing, as it were, its gravitation to become spiritualized; those lines, striking out in all directions, and extending almost to infinity, the floods of variegated light pouring through the rich windows, the bold sculpture of these vast edifices, all contributes to carry the soul into the region of miracles, and force it to contemplate the Supreme Architect of the Universe.

This Christian architecture, we will admit, does not excite physical sensibility, nor flatter the voluptuous imagination; but it penetrates the depths of our existence, it strikes the most tender chords of the soul, it awakens faith and raises us above the cares of this miserable life; it delights the imagination eager of grandeur and magnificence; it ravishes all the intellectual faculties and raises the desires of man towards a future life. Thus, though we are still on Earth, on entering these immense edifices we think of Heaven, and the sight of the works of man leads us to God. In a word, the Gothic architecture of our temples, based on Christian principles, is nothing else than the sublime

manifestation of the Christian thought, for the object of Christianity is to disengage man from the empire of the senses and to raise him to the contemplation and the love of celestial things.

In coolly examining the general march of the human mind, we see that at this glorious epoch, writers and artists were penetrated with the same thought and the same object: to express, the one by *words*, the other by *signs*, the belief, the truths, the ideas, and the morals of Christianity, which were wonderfully developed by theology and Christian philosophy. Such was the liveliness and purity of the faith which presided over their works, that both proved themselves faithful interpreters of the same truths. What the writers gave in words, the artists represented by figures; a different language, it is true, but in the same simple, correct, elegant, and grave style. Now, according to the words already cited, the beautiful is the splendor of the true *Pulchrum splendor veri*; consequently, the literature and the arts of this epoch shine forth radiant with beauty, because, being penetrated with Christian truth, they reflect none but the rays of truth; the same principles inspiring the poet and the artist give to the first *os magna sonaturum*, and to the second *manum magna et pulchra conficturam*.

After what we have already seen, we need not be surprised that the great men of the Ages of Faith did not relish any but Christian sciences, Christian literature, and Christian art. Exclusively nourished from their infancy on Christian classics, they knew little else but Christianity, and faithfully preserved what they early received: *Quo semel imbuta fuerit recens testa diu, Christianum servavit odorem*.

In concluding, we will ask, are we wrong in affirming that the general restoration of the sciences, literature and the arts in Europe was anterior to what is called the *Renaissance*? Can it be still maintained that, if the books of classics once more became Christian, they would lead the world back into barbarism? Is it not as clear as the sun, that, under the influence of Christian classics, two things took place? Literature, the arts and sciences became entirely Christian, and the most magnificent *idea* of wisdom and civilization that the eye of man ever contemplated was raised up. Theology, philosophy, literature and the arts, reaching the summit of perfection, produced men, with whom the past and the present have nothing to compare, — Albert the Great and St. Thomas, Dante and Petrarch, Giotto and the Blessed Angelico, and even Raphael and Michael-Angelo.

Bow down the head: we have named immortal kings of science, of literature, and of arts.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

NOT satisfied with having destroyed the first object *opposed* to the return to Christian classics, in demonstrating that the general restoration of the sciences, literature, and the arts was anterior to the *Renaissance*, we have assumed the offensive by affirming that *that epoch is the cause of the decline and corruption of Latin in Europe*. This is what remains for us to prove.

We are no longer good Latinists: this is what we are told by those even who are interested in maintaining the contrary. Many years ago, a distinguished functionary of the university said: — “Instruction is confined to the few, and it is even dangerous for the most part of those included in this few, it is incomplete and bad for all. Greek and Latin even, which are the main object of collegial studies, are badly taught: the proof is, that *all* are ignorant of Greek, and *not one* knows Latin well. To judge of the value of scientific teaching in France, there exists an infallible test — the examination for the bachelor’s degree; well, I frankly declare that it is seven years since I assisted at these examinations for the first time, and *that during these seven years I have not found a single candidate in ten who replied even tolerably well!*”¹

We are no longer good Latinists! This is what our own sense whispers to us. The best amongst us, upon leaving college, can scarcely read a page of Cicero or Tacitus without the use of a dictionary, and certainly not one would be able to sustain a conversation or a discussion in Latin, however short. At present it is still worse; our memory only retains some reminiscences of Latin, so faint, that with the exception of those works which our particular state has placed constantly before us, we dare not ask the explanation of a passage of an author, however easy, nor perhaps to translate it, *without a translation*, and much less to write our thoughts in Latin.

¹ Letter of M. Gatien Arnault, Professor of Philosophy, to the Faculty of Literature of Toulouse.

We are no longer good Latinists! This is what facts prove. Would it be the case, for example, that the Latin discourse pronounced from time immemorial at the great meetings of the Paris colleges by one of the heads of the university is now made in French, to spare the learned corporation the jeers to which the Latin of their professors exposed them? Would it be the case, that one of the reasons why philosophy and the Roman law are no longer taught in Latin, is on account of the difficulty, we dare not say that the professors, but that the pupils, experience in expressing themselves clearly in that language? Not only is it that we neither know how to write or speak Latin, but we no longer know how to judge of it correctly: the following fact, well known throughout France, will prove this.

About the year 1825, the very learned Cardinal Mai, librarian to the Propaganda, discovered a part of the *Republic* of Cicero and had it printed. Some copies of it arrived in Paris, and, amongst others, they fell into the hands of a sub-professor of one of the principal colleges of the capital, whose son was following the course. This professor translated into French a page of the newly-discovered Cicero and gave it to his pupils as a theme, being certain that no one could *pillage*. The father, accidentally looking over the exercises of his son, observed the theme, and identified the place from which it was taken, and dictated to his son the Latin page from Cicero and placed it with the others. The titular professor corrected the theme without knowing whence it came. After a careful examination, he decided that five pupils had written better Latin than this which had been copied, so that *Cicero was only sixth in the class*.

We do not know Latin, yet we have consecrated six or seven years to it; considering the great parade made of this study, we ought to be the first Latinists in the world; and whence comes this great falling off in a language on which turns the whole system of our public instruction? Amongst other causes, to expose which would carry us too far, there is one we must signalize as being the first, and also in order to justify the proposition announced above.

The study of a dead language offers in itself sufficient difficulties, but these are much increased when the language is that of a people whose ideas, sentiments, religion, institutions, and customs, whose public and private life, are totally different to ours, The child does not find, either in his early education, or in the society in the midst of which he lives, any idea corresponding with that of the world whose language he is condemned to study; he must guess the sense of the subject and of the words. In this new world he cannot discover the cardinal points; he gropes along and is often stopped by insurmountable difficulties, to

avoid which he falls into new ones, and finishes by becoming disgusted with a study which is always a labor without ever becoming a pleasure to him. This is, we attest, what all who have completed their studies have experienced ever since the return of pagan literature. We are obliged to study pagan Latin, which is the language of a society having nothing in common with our own, — the genius of which in no way resembles our mother tongue, — a language composed of ideas, facts, and things, for which our intelligence has in no way been prepared. Hence, the extreme difficulty of learning it, and the imperfect knowledge we acquire of it, not to say the complete ignorance in which we remain with regard to it.

This was not the case before the reign of the pagan classics: Christian Latin was then the first thing studied, which at once shows that the difficulties must have been much less. Mother of our modern languages, Christian Latin offers many striking resemblances to the maternal idiom. On opening his Latin book, the young scholar found the same simple and natural construction; few or no inversions; the same style of ideas as those acquired in his first education. This Christian intelligence had no difficulty in divining the thought hidden under a new form: he did not find himself a stranger in this world which was not new to him. At every step he met with names, facts, and things with which his first reading, his mother's conversation, and the instruction of the priest, had familiarized him long since. The study of Latin was little more for him than an affair of memory. His labor soon became a pleasure, because it was intelligible to him, and he quickly acquired Latin, which he spoke without difficulty and wrote with correctness; this is proved by all the monuments of the period.

All this is very true, it is said; but the youth of those days did not know the Latin of Augustus. We begin by replying that he knew at least one of the Latin idioms. In this he was superior to us, for in consigning the Christian Latin to oblivion, to give ourselves up exclusively to the study of the pagan tongue, we have succeeded in knowing neither the one nor the other. Again, nothing is more false than to suppose that, before the *Renaissance*, educated persons were ignorant of the Latin of the age of Augustus. We appeal to the good faith of every person of condition, and will ask them whether the works of antiquity were not read and appreciated as much before as since the *Renaissance*? We reply, in fine, that the best Latin is not, as we have proved, that of the age of Augustus, but rather that of the great Christian ages.

The first object, then, that we have just examined is false in all points, for it reposes on a confusion of ideas and words condemned by facts, but obstinately preserved by the partisans of pagan classics.

As a second objection, it is said that the remedy, the substitution of Christian classics, is impossible, since the course of studies for the *baccalaureate* degree imperiously exacts the study of the profane authors. As a first reply, we ask if it be true or no, that the exclusive use of pagan books in education is one of the causes which have contributed to corrupt the morals and pervert the ideas of society, during the last three hundred years, and which have led it to the brink of a gulf which threatens us with destruction? We ask again, whether such a system ought to be continued under any consideration? Supposing the baccalaureate to be an invincible difficulty to the adoption of a different plan, it becomes a question between the degree of bachelor and the existence of society, and, since it is a question of life and death, we naturally conclude that the baccalaureate ought to be suppressed, that society may live. If, then, society is still curable, and the remedy proposed necessary, we are right in affirming that the remedy is possible.

We further add, that the Christian classics are not necessary in France only, but to the whole of Europe, and since all the countries of Europe are not subject to this objectionable examination for the degree of bachelor, those which are free may adopt the reform which will assure their future.

We reply, in fine, that the superior council established by the new law on education in France has the power to modify the program of examination to which those who aspire to the degree of bachelor are at present subject. Instead of naming none but pagan authors, without prejudice to literature, to society, or to religion, these might be reduced, and the young Christian called upon to know, at least, the principle Christian authors instead. It would be much more conformable to liberty only to exact of the candidate a knowledge of Latin, without obliging him to learn it from any particular work or author. We do not fear to affirm that by such a measure the council would render the greatest service to the country, and, although it might provoke the dissatisfaction of some, it would be repaid by the approbation of all wise men who occupy themselves seriously about the future.

From theory we will pass to practice, and we maintain that the remedy is perfectly practicable. In this place we will fully develop our idea. In the sixteenth century a great social law was violated: the Christian source destined to nourish the Christian generations was changed into a pagan source, and education, becoming pagan, produced a pagan society, in the bosom of which all the ideas and vices of paganism developed themselves. We ask a termination of this strange aberration; we ask that order be re-established, that it may re-establish

itself in society; we ask, in consequence, that the philosophers and rhetoricians of Greece and Rome may no longer be *either the sole or the principal* pedagogues of Christian youth; that the Christian authors may henceforth fill this noble, this delicate function.

Do we wish by this to exclude the pagan authors? Though this were the case, we should only be the echoes of the greatest men of the greatest period of modern history: but all we ask is simply that the accessories be not made the principals. Now, in Christian education it will be admitted without difficulty that paganism is but an accessory, and therefore, as such, its place ought to be secondary. Since a great point is made of it, we admit that the child has two societies with which to become acquainted, the one, of which he is the child, and will be called upon to honor and to serve; the other, which he may ignore without prejudice to his own happiness or that of his fellow-creatures. The Christian authors are the organs of the first, and the pagan of the second: it is easy to decide their respective places.

Here we anticipate the proposition of a new difficulty. It will be said, it is not possible to study the Christian and the pagan authors together; the time of the classes does not permit of it. In adopting the profane classics only, the pupils are scarcely able to explain a portion of them. The greater number of the young people quit their rhetoric without having ever read, much less explained, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Quintus Curtius, from one end to the other. What would be the case if the Christian authors were added?

This is exactly the inconvenience arising from the use of the pagan classics: the extreme difficulty of acquiring the language of a society totally different from our own condemns youth to a long and ungrateful study, and deprives him of the time necessary to *read*, much less to examine thoroughly, the others. This disadvantage would in a great measure disappear if the Christian Latin were studied first.² The facility with which the pupil would learn would leave him time to read a great deal of Latin, and this would give him great facility for understanding pagan Latin, the words of which, after all, are much the same as the Christian idiom. On the other hand, when it shall be established that the use of the Christian classics intrench upon the profane, what serious inconvenience can arise? To know a little less of Phædrus and Æsop, and a little more of the Holy Scriptures; — a little less of Ovid and Virgil, and a little more of the Psalms and Prophets; — a little less of

² The present method of studying languages must also be modified: a system that requires six or seven years to learn a language, which, after all, is not learnt, must be defective.

Cicero and Demosthenes, and a little more of St. Gregory and St. Chrysostom, would not check the development of the intelligence, pervert education, compromise society, or outrage common sense.

We think, then, that experience proves that, by commencing with Christian Latin exclusively, the learner would not only be enabled to see the principal pagan authors, which now serve as classics, but would see them much better. *The lad would know all he knows at present, and would know it better. Besides which, he would be conversant with a tongue and with authors of which he is entirely ignorant at present.* Thus, the baccalaureate, which inspires so much solicitude, would suffer nothing, whilst its influence would be much less fatal to youth and to society.

Need we add, that in the present form, the baccalaureate makes no promise of immortality; that the most serious interests of the future demand its suppression, or radical modification? The way to destroy or to change it is precisely that which we have pointed out. It is useless to add that the degree of bachelor is not of obligation with the clergy, therefore, they may immediately adopt the Christian classics, and *it is with the clergy that this reform, so vital to religion and society, ought to commence, as well as every other.*

As a last objection, it is said that the remedy will be inefficacious, seeing that the professor can always, when so disposed, make pagans of his pupils. We reply, in the first place, that it will be more difficult than it is at present; and again, that with the Christian classics bad professors will become more rare, and the good ones will still improve, according to the proverb, *Tell me whom you frequent, and I will tell you who you are.* In the third place, we reply, that with the Christian classics a bad professor may make pagan pupils, but a good one cannot: three centuries are there to prove this, and this alone shows an enormous difference between the two systems.

Reduced to its most simple expression, this difference signifies that if the Christian classics cannot, through the fault of men, save religion and society in Europe, the pagan classics, in spite of all the efforts of men, will infallibly and irrecoverably lead to the destruction of religion and society throughout Europe. Though the chances of success should be even less than is generally supposed, we will ask, should we hesitate an instant to employ the Christian classics? Between two remedies, the one of which will certainly kill the patient, whilst the other offers some chance of healing him, does not conscience make it a duty of the doctor to employ the first and reject the second?

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

CHAPTER XXIX.

PLAN FOR A CHRISTIAN CLASSIC LIBRARY.

To bring up the young in the spirit of the society that has produced them, and of which they must be the continuators, is the first rule dictated by common sense. To bring up, in a Christian manner, the members of a Christian society, is the necessary application of the great law. Education consists in the transmission of ideas; and this transmission is made by words, either written or spoken. The written word, with which alone we occupy ourselves in this place, is imparted through the medium of the books placed in the hands of children, which they are obliged to study for several years, which are carefully explained to them, which are held up to them as models, which they are obliged to learn by heart and to reproduce in their own tongue and which they invoke, as occasion requires, in support of their own thoughts and judgment. All people have understood the important influence of this written word on the destinies of the future. Christians have participated as well, or we may say more, than other societies in this good sense which makes public morals and ideas to depend upon the teaching of youth. Jealous of preserving the sacred deposit of religion intact, they have carefully withheld, from the lips of the rising generations, the cup, however brilliant it might be, that might contain a poisoned draught. This has been the law, and unless we would perish we must return to it.

Now, as we have seen, the only classic books put into the hands of youth by our forefathers were the *Holy Scriptures*, *The Acts of the Martyrs*, the *Works of the Fathers* and the *Doctors of the Church*. Their admirable wisdom shows itself here under two glorious traits. Christians, before everything, they acknowledged the existence of a Christian literature, as the eye admits the existence of the sun, and they would that their children, destined to become Christians like their fathers, should at once become conversant with the language and the literature of the Christian society.

PLAN FOR A LIBRARY

They knew also that education is the apprenticeship of life. With them life was a serious thing, and they struggled a death-struggle against evil. Under the penalty of being conquered and unhappy on both sides of the tomb, every Christian must be a hero, and in order to prepare his children for this, they considered nothing so suitable as the teaching of God himself; as the heroic examples of their forefathers, as the sublime exhortations of those immortal doctors, of those saints of the East and the West, who speak with the triple authority of knowledge, eloquence, and virtue. Fifty generations, such as the world had never witnessed before, are the glorious proof of the justice of their calculation.

Well nourished on the Christian aliment, their youths, when arrived at the age of maturity, were allowed to enter into the pagan world; to interrogate its men, its monuments, its manners and laws. The new Hebrew could then visit Egypt, not only without danger of becoming a slave, but with the just confidence of possessing himself of its riches, in order to make them serve to ornament the tabernacle. Thus, the integrity of the Christian spirit and the complete development of science were found in unison. With our forefathers, all commenced and finished with religion, and such is the system to which we must imperiously return.

With the people, whatever they may be, religion is everything. The book which teaches it ought to be the first in the hands of the child and the last in those of the aged. With the exception of our modern times, which have fallen into chaos from having neglected it, in all times and places this has been understood and acted upon.

With the Jews, the Bible was everything; with the tradition that explained it, it composed the national science. Defended even to blood, it is respected like the holy ark and loved as the country.

With the Mahometans, the law of the prophet, accompanied with some commentaries, is the only book. In it the child is taught to read, the judge seeks the reasons of his decisions, and men of every state and age their conduct. When a child has succeeded in learning a chapter, it is considered an event, and celebrated by a public *fête*. Placed on a rich litter, and surrounded by torches, the national book is carried in triumph through the streets, followed by children and masters, and saluted with respect by the parents and populace: joy is in the heart of the society, and this manifestation shows the perpetuity of the spirit that animates it. After the study of each chapter, the *fête* is renewed.

Now, for Christian nations the Gospel is everything: it is their intellectual, moral, domestic, civil, literary, artistic, and scientific life. In this immense ocean of light, they should be as the fish in its element.

The Catholic Church, their mother, incessantly repeats this great truth. There is not one of her solemn assemblies where she does not place on a brilliant throne this book of religious and social oracles. We are obliged, however, to say that, for several centuries, it has stood for nothing, or almost nothing, in our public education; therefore, why should we be surprised that it stands for nothing, or almost nothing, in our ideas and morals? Why, in other terms, need we be astonished that we have ceased to be Christians? We must either return, or be lost. The actual state of the world does not permit either delay or concession. The rapid formation of two parties of good and evil, one of which will reign unrivalled in after times, is no longer a problem. Raised to its highest power, evil now takes the form of absolute negation, and an absolute negation can only be combated by an affirmation equally positive. Catholicism, and that in all its integrity, the Catholicism professed by the martyrs, can alone struggle against the society of evil. But one thing alone can restore, in all its purity and vigor, Catholicism to the bosom of Europe, and that one thing is an education decidedly Catholic. Such an education is only possible with Christian classics; we therefore demand that the conduct of the Christian ages may be returned to, with respect to education. This established, we proceed with our plan.

For a Christian people, as we have said, the Gospel is everything; all should come out of and return to it. Around this divine axis should revolve the whole system of education.

Now, the Gospel is a center placed in the middle of the world, in which meet, from two opposite currents, the ages that precede and those that follow it. To initiate the child in the knowledge of the Gospel, he must study in the most beautiful work the secular preparation of this great fact. The charming narratives of the Bible, not in the Latin of the eighteenth century, but in the primitive and consecrated Latin of the Vulgate, would become the first book of his college, as it had been of his domestic life.

But further, the Gospel is a code, and the child studies it. Every code requires explanation. The works of the Fathers form the most perfect verbal commentary, and the child nourishes himself upon them. The acts of martyrs form the practical explanation, and the child knows them, and his life becomes evangelical. Such is the principle which has served us for compass. A few words will explain our plan.

1st. — Suppose the present division of classes be maintained, *all the classics as far as the fourth class inclusive should be Christian*. All this time is necessary, at least with the present method of teaching languages, to acquire Christian Latin well and to get an insight into Greek. It is necessary also, in order that the young generations may be

well nourished in Christianity, for they too frequently come out of families but little Christian, and are destined to live in the midst of a society still less so.

2ndly. — From the *third class to rhetoric the classics may be Christian and pagan*. At this period the study of paganism offers less danger, because, according to Tertullian, the heart and mind of the youth are well steeped at the Christian source. Besides which, this will give sufficient time for studying and reading the profane authors as much as is required for the baccalaureate.

3rdly. — As to the particular choice of the Christian classics, we need only say in this place that it has been decided, after mature examination, that the literary execution of this important labor should be confided to men whose enlightenment and experience offer both to clergy and laity all the guarantees that can be desired, and we can affirm, without being accused of vain pretension, that the general choice is very good.

On the one hand, we find them indicated throughout Christian tradition; on the other, they are formally recommended by the Church. “Man being predisposed towards evil from childhood,” says the fifth General Council of Lateran, “the education of youth is of the utmost importance. Thus, we decree that all masters and professors are not only obliged to teach children and young persons grammar, rhetoric, and other similar things, but they must also instruct them in religion, and teach them the *sacred hymns*, the *Psalms*, *the lives of the Saints*; it is also forbidden for them to teach other things on feast days than those which appertain to religion and good morals.”¹

We shall hear later what the holy Council of Trent says; this great restorer of the Church and of society expresses itself in terms not less formal on the necessity of the classic study of the Scriptures, not only in the seminaries, but in the public colleges or gymnasiums. The reasons which influenced this august assembly were exactly those which have been developed in the course of this work: the study of the sacred code is necessary for the defense and augmentation of faith, for the preservation and the propagation of the true doctrine; in a word, if youth is not nourished upon Christianity, society will cease to be Christian.² Such is the judgment of this immortal council.

¹ *Con. Later. V. sess. viii. an. 1512.*

² In gymnasiis etiam publicis, ubi tam honorifica, et cæterorum omnium maxime necessaria lectio hactenus instituta non fuerit, religiosissimorum principum, ac rerumpublicarum pietate et charitate ad Catholicæ fidei defensionem et incrementum, sanæque doctrinæ conservationem et propagationem instituantur. — *Sess. V. de Refor. c. 1.*

Thus, it will be seen that we are not innovators, which name applies to those who introduce paganism into education; nor are we visionaries, or disciples of our own ideas; those are visionary who pretend to preserve Christian generations whom they imbue with paganism, and leave in ignorance of Christianity; the disciples of their own ideas are those who contemn the constant practice of the Ages of Faith, and the prescriptions of the universal Church, and impose their own theories as infallible.

We console ourselves with the hope that it will be admitted that the most imperious necessity of the present time is to render education Christian, consequently, to familiarize the rising generations, at an early age, with the ideas, the men, the facts, the examples, the maxims, and the writings where the vivifying waters of Christianity are found in most abundance.

In fine, when the choice of classics shall be known, we have every confidence that it will be admitted that the selection is calculated to attain the desired end.

But it will be asked, why do we publish, since Christian classics are already to be had? Is it not establishing an unnecessary competition? Our reply is contained in a few words: We publish this library because it is indispensable that instruction should have a *logical suite*, such as will insure success in study, and at the same time graduate the labor, and also a sufficient development to nourish with Christianity all the faculties of the youth, from his entrance into college to his leaving it. Now, the attempts that have been made hitherto, though useful in themselves, though conceived in the most laudable intentions, appear to us far from satisfying this double object.

On the one hand, they confine themselves to some isolated tracts, which, drowned in the midst of pagan books, can be attended with no serious result, either literary or moral. The estimable authors of these little works, it appears to us, have not taken sufficient account of the existence of the two Latin languages. If they had observed this, how is it they have not seen that in carrying on the study of the Christian and pagan tongues together, the child could only acquire a jargon composed of the two idioms. Is it not like obliging him to study, for example, Italian and Spanish together? This mixture is unfortunate in the result, and attended with great difficulty in the practice. And how much more deplorable must be the confusion produced in the mind from the simultaneous study of Christian and pagan ideas? Where will the child find his touchstone of true virtue, glory, and wisdom, from that which is only so in appearance? Before allowing him to frequent the pagans, wait, as did St. Basil, till he be thoroughly Christian.

PLAN FOR A LIBRARY

Considered under another point of view, this mixture of paganism and Christianity is a system completely in arrear. Under the present state of things, in education, as in religion, in politics, in philosophy, and in all the rest, there are but two systems left, the Christian and the pagan; Catholicism or socialism; all or nothing. Men and things, all that does not belong to one or the other, counts for nothing.

On the other hand, the treatises or pieces alluded to above are wanting as to logical gradation. In fact, they offer, for instance, the study of St. Jerome before St. Gregory, which is the contrary to what ought to be. The immortal pontiff is the type of Christian Latin; and it is only after thoroughly studying his works that the student can go on to St. Jerome without endangering his literary taste, for the writings of this latter still partake of the pagan style. The doctor of Bethlehem ought to form the transition between the Christian and the pagan tongues: such is the place he occupies in our library.

CHAPTER XXX.

PARTICULAR ADVANTAGES OF THIS LIBRARY.

BY introducing Christianity logically, gradually, and completely into education, we introduce it into the mind, for, we like to repeat, *the beautiful* is the splendor of *the true*. This object, which is so desirable now-a-days, is attained with so much more certainty, because our classics are above all comparison in a literary point of view. We wish to insist on this important point, for the influence of paganism has been such, that a great number of persons have lost the taste for the beautiful in Christian literature still more than in painting and architecture.

We repeat, that the Holy Scriptures, *The Acts of the Martyrs*, and the works of the Fathers, are the models we propose to youth.

If the superiority of the style of the holy books over the thousand writers of all times is doubted by some persons, we ask them to meditate the following passage from an author free from suspicion. The following is the comparison established by Sterne between profane and sacred eloquence: — “There are, says the celebrated English author, “two kinds of eloquence; one scarcely merits the name. It consists in a fixed number of periods, arranged and measured, and of artificial figures, brilliant with words and pretension. This eloquence dazzles, but does not enlighten the understanding. Admired and affected by the half-learned, whose judgment is as false as their taste is vitiated, it is entirely stranger to the sacred writers. If it was always considered as beneath the great men of all ages, with how much more reason must it appear unworthy of those writers whom the spirit of eternal wisdom animates in their watchings, and who ought to attain that strength, that majesty, that simplicity, which man alone never attains!

“The other sort of eloquence is entirely opposed to that which I have just censured, and it truly characterizes the Holy Scriptures. Its excellence is not derived from a labored and far-fetched elocution, but from a wonderful mixture of simplicity and majesty: — a double

character so difficult to unite, that we very rarely find it in compositions purely human. The holy pages are not charged with superfluous and affected ornaments. The Divine Being, having been pleased to condescend to speak our language to bring us the light of the revelation, has pleased to endow it with those natural and graceful turns which must penetrate the soul.

“The greatest writers of antiquity, either Greek or Latin, lose much of the grace of their style when translated literally into our modern languages. The famous apparition of Jupiter, in the first book of Homer, his pompous description of a tempest, his Neptune shaking the earth and opening it to its center, the beauty of the horses of his Pallas, — all those passages, in a word, admired from age to age, wither and disappear almost entirely in the Latin version. Read the translations of Sophocles, of Theocritus, do we find anything more than some slight vestiges of the graces which charmed us in the originals? We conclude that *pomp of expression, softness of numbers, and a musical phrase, constitute the greater part of the beauties of our classical authors, whilst those of the Holy Scriptures consist in the greatness of the things themselves rather than in that of the words.* The ideas contained therein are so elevated in their nature, that they must of necessity appear sublime in their modest apparel: they shine through the weakest and most literal versions of the Bible.” What eloquence can be more worthy of serious minds and Christian people?

After the Scriptures, nothing can have a more just claim to our admiration and respect than *The Acts of the Martyrs*. If the sacred books are due to the inspiration of God himself, the responses of the martyrs to the questions of their judges were, according to the promises of the Savior, dictated by the Holy Spirit. In a literary point of view, they present exactly the same style of beauty as the Bible. Simplicity of words, and the eloquence of the things themselves, form their sublime character. In the face of the masters of the world, armed with sophisms, threats, and promises, followed by a long *cortège* of lictors, of proconsuls, of prefects, of judges, of executioners and of wild beasts, men of the people, women, children, and poor slaves are seen to set at nought, by their simplicity and firmness, and by the clearness of their language, the sophisms of the philosophers, the captious questions of the magistrates, and the pathetic appeals of afflicted parents.

In proportion as the courage of the martyr rises into heroism, his character unfolds, and his words shine forth in traits of the most sublime eloquence. In becoming more urgent, the dialogue becomes more animated, more impressive. The grandeur of the cause, and the contrast between the power of the tyrant and the weakness of the

victim, between the brutality and fury of the one and the innocence and calm of the other, — all this moves to tears those whose hearts are most hardened; the whole drama finishes by attaining the highest degree of poetry. Elevation and simplicity, unctious and vigor, grace and nature, overpowering rapidity and touching details, — such are the literary qualities which characterize the history of these struggles, which are unexampled in the annals of the world.

Hence it is that *The Acts of the Martyrs*, like everything that is truly beautiful in its essence and form, enjoy the privilege of inspiring the child, at the same time that they delight and have delighted the greatest men of the greatest ages. Amongst a thousand examples, we might cite that of St. Theresa; but every one is conversant with **it**; we will therefore quote that of the celebrated Joseph Scaliger. "*The Acts of the Martyrs*," says this learned critic, "are so touching, that the mind never tires of reading them. Every one may experience this, according to the degree of intelligence and sensibility with which he is endowed; but for myself I avow that I have never read in ecclesiastical, much less in profane history, anything that has excited such extraordinary and violent movements in my heart; so that in quitting this book I no longer knew myself." ¹

Almost in the same rank as the Scriptures, inspired by God, and the replies of the martyrs, dictated by the Holy Ghost, may be placed the Fathers of the Church. Their works are the most imposing monuments of Christianity, and may well be considered as the glories of human genius. The teaching, the words of these men, if such a name may be given to these exceptional beings, who seemed to have been raised to Heaven to contemplate truth, may be looked upon rather as the teaching and words of the universal Church than of individuals. Here Christians of all ages, of all conditions, may learn what to reject, and what to preserve; what to hate, and what to love; what to do, and what to avoid; and even what is worth admiring, in a human point of view, in eloquence and poetry.

It is then with justice that these incomparable geniuses, these great men, raised up by God to be at the same time the guardians and the interpreters of the Testament of His Son, are called in history, Mirrors of Eternal Light, Organs of the Holy Ghost, Heralds of the Empire of God, Columns of Religion, Revengers of Truth, Models of Virtue, Leaders of the Christian People, Masters of the Human Race, Torches of the Church, Beacons of the Universe. But what we must remark here is that the works of the Fathers are not only sources of Divine wisdom, but

¹ Annot. ad Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.*

also treasures of eloquence and erudition of all kinds. On this point there is but one opinion throughout the truly learned. Even the most *classic* men of the ages, the most impassioned for Greece and Rome, have paid their tribute of admiration to the literary talents of the Fathers of the Church.

“A Father of the Church, a Doctor of the Church,” exclaims La Bruyère, “what names! what gloominess in their writings! what dryness! what cold devotion! what pedantry! say those who have never read them. But rather, what astonishment for those who form this curious opinion, if they saw in the works of the Fathers, more delicacy of turn, more politeness of mind, more riches of expression, more strength of reasoning, and more natural graces than we usually find in the works of the time, which we read with relish, and give name and vanity to their authors! What pleasure to love religion, and to see it grow, supported and explained by such noble geniuses and by such solid minds; above all, when we know that for extent of knowledge, for philosophical principles, for application and development, for justice of conclusion, for dignity, for moral and sentimental beauty, there is nothing that can be compared to St. Augustine, but Plato and Cicero.”²

We do not wish to cavil with the author above quoted, but we are tempted to ask him where he has discovered that Plato and Cicero are comparable to St. Augustine, as to *extent of knowledge, purity of philosophical principles, and moral and sentimental beauty*? May God forgive the spirit of the *Renaissance*, the fatal effects of which we see operating upon the strongest minds.

From these general considerations on the literary merits of our Christian classics, we will pass on to a more detailed examination.

We will remark, at first, that the number of the authors is very limited. Now, experience teaches that the best way of acquiring a language is not to make use of a number of different books, but to study one perfectly, so that to the pupil, being thoroughly imbued with the author, his style and views come naturally, without effort, into the mind, when it is necessary to write or speak. Thus is verified the proverb: *Timeo doctorem unius libri*. Again, our classic authors, already so few in number, are still further reduced, since they serve alike for both Latin and Greek; thus the child has the immense advantage of always remaining in the society of the same authors, with whose way of thinking he is already familiar; and it is almost impossible for him not to retain the learning thus imparted to him through the whole course of his studies.

² *Caractères des Esprits forts*, tom. i. p. 153.

In fine, the books indicated for Latin and Greek reading contain all the variety desirable in the studies of the youth. Whilst they will make him acquainted with the different authors, they will familiarize him with Latin and Greek literature.

This is our idea: we desire to see the difficulties, as much as possible, removed from the path of the student; that he be delivered from the long, fastidious, almost always ungrateful, and sometimes even dangerous labor, of hunting through dictionaries, to which he is at present subject. It is sufficient for this, to give him by word of mouth the precise sense of a word, or the explanation of a thing he may long seek in vain unassisted. Nothing seems more conformable to the course of Providence in the study of language, nor more calculated to insure success, at the same time that the pupil is preserved from the double scourge of disgust and vexation.

However, lest such a method should lead the intelligence into idleness, this must be avoided, by obliging the student to occupy himself with Latin and Greek reading, which he must understand for himself and of which he must render an account.

We will add further that since it is so necessary nowadays to Christianize education, the pagan authors must be taught in a *Christian manner*, which may be done successfully by the following means: instead of giving them, as has been too often done since the *Renaissance*, as accomplished models of real virtues, care must be taken to point out the imperfection of their wisdom, of their prudence, their temperance, their intentions, and their sentiments, in comparing all things with the faith. We will suppose, for instance, that it is necessary to explain the treatise *de Amicitia* of Cicero. In order to display the inferiority of natural friendship, the precepts of charity, which are given in the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, should be exposed, or the true character of this virtue should be given, by explaining the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul, and the first Epistle to the Corinthians.

Again, it would be very advantageous to the pupil to join to the Commentaries of Cæsar the wars of Joshua, of David, and the Machabees. On the one hand, the child would see the justice that ought to preside over war, and the providence and strength of the hand of God; on the other, he would see the errors of the great captains of paganism, who, for vain-glory or some vile interest, considered themselves justified in drawing the sword and carrying desolation throughout the universe. What wise, what sanctifying parallels may be drawn between the heroes of Greece and Rome, and the great Christian

emperors and captains, Theodosius, Charlemagne, St. Louis, St. Stephen of Hungary, Vasco de Gama, Albuquerque, and many others!

In fine, the superiority of Christianity will be manifest of itself, if the professor, when he meets with an erroneous sentiment or principle in a pagan author, be careful to test it by the Gospel. Thus, when Cicero bestows praise upon himself, or lavishes it upon others, he must show that it is false, unworthy of a Christian soul, who ought to seek reward, not in flattery, but in life eternal, and depose his honors at the feet of Him from whom comes every perfect gift. Thus again, when Cicero in his *Offices* says “no one should seek revenge, at least unless provoked, or unless he has received an injury;” here is a splendid field for the professor to display the superiority of the Christian law, and spread before the eyes of his pupils the great lesson of Calvary!

Thus far for the substance: what shall we say as to the form? Whilst he leads his pupil to admire the many beautiful phrases of Cicero, the master will be careful to point out that all this abundance of words, all this Asiatic pomp, besides being far from suiting all subjects, is often unworthy of the Christian, who knows that eloquence is to be found in things rather than in words, and that speech has been given to man not to incite praise, but to serve to the glory of God and the advantage of his neighbor.

This rapid glance, it appears to us, will be sufficient to show what we mean by the Christian teaching of the profane authors.

We may be allowed here to make an observation of the greatest importance. It is not only on the pupils that the Christian classics are calculated to exercise a salutary influence, but on the masters also. Almost always the echoes of the two worlds, the Christian authors, more particularly *The Acts of the Martyrs*, open an immense horizon to the professors; they thus furnish the natural means of developing all their treasures of Christian and pagan condition, or they oblige them to make an ample provision, in order to be able to furnish the explanations required either by the text itself, or by the pupil. Great as it is, however, this advantage is only secondary. Whilst the continual study of the pagan authors dries up the heart, and sometimes even corrupts it, falsifies the judgment, and vitiates the taste; the study of the Christian authors nourishes the heart and sanctifies it, forms the judgment, purifies the taste, makes man practical, and necessarily useful to society.

In conclusion, we will say, that it appears to us to be in the designs of Providence that the study of the living languages should become more and more general in the present times; and we imagine that in producing our Latin and Greek classics in French, English, German,

Spanish, and Italian, we render a great service to the whole of Europe. Translated into all these languages, study would not only be facilitated, but the entire youth of Europe would feed upon the same thought, drink of the same water, eat of the same bread, and be quickened in the same baptism: and this thought is eminently noble, and eminently social, since it is eminently Christian. Now, nothing is left but to bring Europe back to that unity of faith, which, for ten centuries, constituted its strength, its peace, and its glory; to those guardian principles of obedience and abnegation without which society is impossible. And it must be admitted that the plan we propose is the only one likely to be truly efficacious. Let these means be employed frankly and universally, and socialism, communism, and all those formidable errors which threaten to reduce everything to chaos, will soon be eradicated: we shall render education Christian; and education, let it not be forgotten, is society, — is the future; for it is the man on both sides of the grave.

THE END