

without the concurrence of their bishops or by an appeal to the emperor. But even this was yielded in time and the episcopal courts usurped, little by little and under various pretenses, almost all judicial functions; presuming to legislate in councils, beyond ecclesiastical matters and invading the province of the State.

We must not evade nor belittle any extenuating phases of what may, at first blush, appear wholly condemnable. It is true that in studying the history of these usurpations we find much to blame. So much may also be found to extenuate these ecclesiastical interferences. The clergy (which about the sixth century came to include the monastic orders) were alone familiar with letters and were therefore appointed to perform political correspondence and to draw up forms of law. Their exclusive knowledge of the arts and sciences introduced them to the notice of the royalty and nobility whose households they entered as tutors; and their general intellectual superiority gave them precedence as counselors and ministers to kings. This was largely true as early as the times of the Roman emperors. It was but natural that this intellectual prestige should increase with the increase of intellectual darkness that flooded the world after the disruption of the Roman empire by the barbarian invasions.

Some writers find nothing but evil in the work and authority usurped by the church of Rome in the middle ages. Others find much good. Each sees according to his point of view and the faith that is within him. The protestant and liberty loving spirit of our age and land finds the search for good, much as the seeking after a "needle in a straw-stalk." Even that which we have just pointed out as deserving to be placed to the "credit" side of this account, we find so profound and eminent a writer as the Rev. John Todd denouncing in no measured terms. "Another striking instance," says he, "of the perversion of mind and the abuse of the human intellect and heart, is the Romish church. No one created mind, apparently, could ever have invented a scheme of delusion, of degradation of the soul, the intellect, the whole man, so perfect and complete as is this. What minds must have been employed in shutting out the light of heaven and in burying the manna which fell in showers so extended! What system! To gather all the books in the world and put them all within the stone walls of the monastery and cloister, to crush schools, except in these same monasteries, in which they trained up men to become more and more skillful in doing the work of ruin, to delude the world with ceremonies and futilities, while the Bible was taken away, and religion muttered her rites in an unknown tongue and all this the result of a settled plan to debase the intellect and mock poor human nature."

We love the above writer but think him too radical in this sweeping denunciation. We believe that at least the first cause of the shutting up of "all the books in the world within the stone walls of the monastery" was the savage attacks of the northern barbarians who would have destroyed them by fire but for this protection. As time wore on, however, and the nations had recovered from the anarchical invasions of barbarian conquest and rule, the intellectual, subservience and ignorance of the people was undoubtedly taken advantage of, and we find, after all, too much

justification in the bitter exclamation of Todd: "And when the reformation held up all these abominations to light, what a masterpiece was the last plan laid to stifle the reason forever! The inquisition! It was reared throughout the Christian world; the decree, by a single blow, prescribed between sixty and seventy printing presses, and excommunicated all who should ever read anything which they might produce. A philosopher who, like Galileo, could pour light upon science and astonish the world by his discoveries, must repeatedly fall into the cruel mercies of the inquisition. The ingenuity of hell secured tasked to invent methods by which the human mind might be shut up in Egyptian darkness; and never has a Catholic community been known to be other than degraded, ignorant, superstitious and sunken. Let light in, and all who receive it rush to infidelity. But what a mass of mind has been, and still is, employed in upholding the system! And what a loss has it produced in quenching, in everlasting darkness, the uncounted millions of glorious minds which have been destroyed by it! If I could find it in any heart to anathematize any order of men—and I hope I can not—it would be those who are thus taking away the key of knowledge and preventing all within the compass of their influence from fulfilling the great object for which they were created."

This is sweeping and, alas! much is too true; but Guizot says that, "nothing tortures history more than logic," and we are often surprised to find that actual results of erratic principles are not always so grave as might be logically apprehended. So in this case. A spirit of protest, natural to the human heart, kept alive a spark of independence and love of liberty that finally set ablaze—not the fires of the Inquisition but the day dawn of truth, of manhood, and a purer worship of Christ, in the reformation.

Some reproach the Middle Age church for her organized existence, believing that religion has no right to exercise exterior authority which is almost sure to result when thus organized. We have no space here to discuss this subject but we have pointed out in a former article, that this organization was an essential factor in the temporal salvation of the invaded countries when the empire fell under the Goths and other northern migrations. In that time of dire anarchy the church still gave men some form of law to cling unto. And her policy was, after all, democratic as well as vigorous, for she invited the capable of all degrees to share her offices of trust. The poorest lad might hope to occupy her highest chair.

And still she was ambitious and oppressive. Guizot, with all his kind words for her, with all his defense and apology for her, says: "What she undertook to govern was human thought, human liberty, private morals, individual opinions." And we claim that in the exercise of her usurped authority, she was arrogant, crafty and unscrupulous, caring little what laws were violated, human or divine, so long as it was required to accomplish her designs. Thus when the sons of Louis the Debonair rebelled against their father they received the backing of the Pope, who hoped thereby to dethrone the latter. Hallam thinks that this gave the Papacy a taste of trampling on crowned heads which it became eager to repeat. Later,

in the quarrels of these same sons of Louis, Charles the Bald and Louis of Bavaria set a bad example to future Popes by requesting a council of bishops to sit in judgment on their conquered brother Lothain, who was adjudged by them as unworthy to sit upon a throne; the council extending their authority further by commanding the reigning princes to divide his territories among themselves on condition that they would rule better than he had done. Here was a precedent of ecclesiastical deposition complemented by royal establishment than which it would have been difficult to mount higher; for surely the king-maker and the king-destroyer is greater than the king. Charles the Bald could not justly complain when, in later years, he was himself deposed by the same authority, his subjects absolved from their allegiance and his crown presented to his brother of Bavaria. Thus the rights of sovereigns were falling into a precarious condition while ecclesiastical power was becoming correspondingly increased. In one instance we read of a king, Boson, who ruled over the kingdom of Arles by special ecclesiastical appointment in which the nobility of the land had no voice. This, however, Hallam believes to have been a forged account, invented to give pretext as precedent to subsequent usurpations. Thus in England in 1141 the bishops of Winchester presumed to appoint the occupant of the throne.

Indeed, we find examples of pontifical king-making as far back as the first union of Rome with the vigorous young kings of the north. Pepin the Short referred his case to the Pope and at his bidding deposed and banished Childeric III, the last of the Merovingians, while he took his kingdom; and Charlemagne, in 800 received the imperial crown from the hands of Pope Leo III.

The Pope also exercised unwarranted authority over Metropolitan bishops. Having established himself as the highest court of appeal, he further declared that each individual bishop was amenable to Rome only and encouraged all to make a direct appeal to the Holy See instead of the regular metropolitan. This blow struck at the root of ecclesiastical equality and gave the Pope unprecedented and unwarranted dignity. The principle was stoutly resisted, however, by them whose dominion was invaded. Among the strongest champions of Gallican freedom against ultra monastic usurpations was Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, whose influence was almost equal to that of any Pope.

At this time, it will be remembered, civil power was almost prostrated by the quarrels of the sons of Louis I, (the Debonaire) and though Hincmar a bold and esteemed statesman, often coming out "best man" in his struggles with the Holy See, the latter perceived that in consequence of these civil turmoils, this was a good time to establish the independence and authority of the Pope. The Decretals of Isidore, since known as the False Decretals, were suddenly announced. They purported to be the decrees of the earliest bishops of Rome and claimed supreme appellate jurisdiction for the Roman See as having received that authority from Jesus Christ. The generation in which they were produced, seems to have been too ignorant to detect the utter historical fraud upon which they were based but subsequent critics laid it ridiculously bare. Hallam