The History Of English Poetry

From The Close of the Eleventh To The Commencement of the Eighteenth Century

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Section XVIII. The same subject continued. Reformation of religion. Its effects on literature in England. Application of this digression to the main subject.

SECT. XVIII.

SOON after the year 1500, Lillye, the famous grammarian, who had learned Greek at Rhodes, and had afterwards acquired a poliſhed Latinity at Rome, under Johannes Sulpicius and Pomponius Sabinus, became the firſt teacher of Greek at any public ſchool in England. This was at ſaint Paul's ſchool in London, then newly eſtabliſhed by dean Colet, and celebrated by Eraſmus; and of which Lillye, as one of the moſt exact and accompliſhed ſcholars of his age, was appointed the firſt maſter[h]. And that antient prejudices were now gradually wearing off, and a national taſte for critical ſtudies and the graces of compoſition began to be diffuſed, appears from this circumſtance alone: that from the year one thouſand five hundred and three to the reformation, there were more grammar ſchools, moſt of which at preſent are perhaps of little uſe and importance, founded and endowed in England, than had been for three hundred years before. The practice of educating our youth in the monaſteries growing into diſuſe, near twenty new grammar ſchools were eſtabliſhed within this period: and among theſe, Wolſey's ſchool at Ipſwich, which ſoon fell a ſacrifice to the reſentment or the avarice of Henry the eighth, deſerves particular notice, as it rivalled thoſe of Wincheſter and Eton. To give ſplendor to the inſtitution,

[h] Knight, LIFE of Colet, p. 19. Pace, abovementioned, in the Epiſtle dedicatory to Colet, before his Treatiſe *De fructu qui ex Doctrina percipitur*, thus compliments Lillye, edit. Baſil. ut ſupr. 1517. p. 13. "Ut politiorem Latinitatem, et ipſam "Romanam linguam, in Britanniam no-"ſtram introduxiſſe videatur.—Tanta [ei] "eruditio, ut extruſa barbarie, in qua "noſtri adoleſcentes ſolebant fere ætatem "conſumere, &c." Eraſmus ſays, in 1514, that he had taught a youth, in three years, more Latin than he could have acquired in any ſchool in England, *ne Liliana quidam excepta*, not even Lillye's excepted. EPISTOL. 165. p. 140. tom. iii.

beſide the ſcholars, it conſiſted of a dean, twelve canons, and a numerous choir[i]. So attached was Wolſey to the new modes of inſtruction, that he did not think it inconſiſtent with his high office and rank, to publiſh a general addreſs to the ſchoolmaſters of England, in which he orders them to inſtitute their youth in the moſt elegant literature[k]. It is to be wiſhed that all his edicts had been employed to ſo liberal and uſeful a purpoſe. There is an anecdote on record, which ſtrongly marks Wolſey's character in this point of view. Notwithſtanding his habits of pomp, he once condeſcended to be a ſpectator of a Latin tragedy of DIDO, from Virgil, acted by the ſcholars of ſaint Paul's ſchool, and written by John Rightwiſe, the maſter, an eminent grammarian[l]. But Wolſey might have pleaded the authority of pope Leo the tenth, who more than once had been preſent at one of theſe claſſical ſpectacles.

It does not however appear, that the cardinal's liberal ſentiments were in general adopted by his brother prelates. At the foundation of ſaint Paul's ſchool above-mentioned, one of the biſhops, eminent for his wiſdom and gravity, at a public aſſembly, ſeverely cenſured Colet the founder for ſuffering the Latin poets to be taught in the new ſtructure, which he therefore ſtyled a houſe of pagan idolatry[m].

In the year 1517, Fox, biſhop of Wincheſter, founded a college at Oxford, in which he conſtituted, with competent ſtipends, two profeſſors for the Greek and Latin languages[n]. Although ſome ſlight idea of a claſſical lecture had already appeared at Cambridge in the ſyſtem of collegiate diſcipline[o],

[i] Tanner, NOTIT. MON. p. 520.

[k] "Elegantiſſima literatura." Fiddes's WOLSEY. COLL. p. 105.

[l] Wood, Ath. Oxon. i. 15. See what is ſaid of this practice, ſupr. p. 386.

[m] "Epiſcopum quendam, et eum qui "habetur a SAPIENTIORIBUS, in magno "hominum Conventu, noſtram ſcholam "blaſphemaſſe, dixiſſeque, me erexiſſe rem "inutilem, imo malam, imo etiam, ut "illius verbis utar, *Domum Idololatriæ*, &c." [Coletus Eraſmo. Lond. 1517.] Knight's LIFE OF COLET, p. 319.

[n] STATUT. C. C. C. Oxon. dat. Jun. 20. 1517. CAP. XX. fol. 51. Bibl. Bodl. MSS LAUD. I. 56.

[o] At Chriſt's college in Cambridge, where, in the ſtatutes given in 1506, a lecturer

this philological eſtabliſhment may juſtly be looked upon, as the firſt conſpicuous inſtance of an attempt to depart from the narrow plan of education, which had hitherto been held ſacred in the univerſities of England. The courſe of the Latin profeſſor, who is expreſſly directed to extirpate BARBARISM from the new ſociety [p], is not confined to the private limits of the college, but open to the ſtudents of Oxford in general. The Greek lecturer is ordered to explain the beſt Greek claſſics; and the poets, hiſtorians, and orators, in that language, which the judicious founder, who ſeems of have conſulted the moſt intelligent ſcholars of the times, recommends by name on this occaſion, are the pureſt, and ſuch as are moſt eſteemed even in the preſent improved ſtate of antient learning. And it is at the ſame time worthy of remark, that this liberal prelate, in forming his plan of ſtudy, does not appoint a philoſophy-lecturer in his college, as had been the conſtant practice in moſt of the previous foundations: perhaps ſuſpecting, that ſuch an endowment would not have coincided with his new courſe of erudition, and would have only ſerved to encourage that ſpecies of doctrine, which had ſo long choaked the paths of ſcience, and obſtructed the progreſs of uſeful knowledge.

Theſe happy beginnings in favour of new and a rational ſyſtem of academical education, were ſeconded by the auſpicious munificence of cardinal Wolſey. About the year 1519, he founded a public chair at Oxford, for rhetoric and humanity, and ſoon afterwards another for teaching the Greek language; endowing both with ample ſalaries [q]. About

turer is eſtabliſhed; who, together with logic and philoſophy is ordered to read, "vel ex poetarum, vel ex oratorum ope-"ribus." Cap. xxxvii. In the ſtatutes of King's at Cambridge, and New college at Oxford, both much more antient, an inſtructour is appointed with the general name of INFORMATOR only, who taught all the learning then in vogue. ROTUL. COMPUT. vet. Coll. Nov. Oxon. "Solut. "Informatoribus ſociorum et ſcolarium, "ivl. xiis. iid."

[p] "Lector ſeu profeſſor artium huma-"niorum ... BARBARIEM a noſtro al-"veario exſtirpet." STATUT. ut ſupr.

[q] Wood, HIST. Univ. Oxon. i. 245-246. But ſee Fiddes's WOLSEY, p. 197.

the year 1524, king Henry the eighth, who deſtroyed or advanced literary inſtitutions from caprice, called Robert Wakefield, originally a ſtudent of Cambridge, but now a profeſſor of humanity at Tubingen in Germany, into England, that one of his own ſubjects, a linguiſt of ſo much celebrity, might no longer teach the Greek and oriental languages abroad: and when Wakefield appeared before the king, his majeſty lamented, in the ſtrongeſt expreſſions of concern, the total ignorance of his clergy and the univerſities in the learned tongues; and immediately aſſigned him a competent ſtipend for opening a lecture at Cambridge, in this neceſſary and neglected department of letters [r]. Wakefield was afterwards a preſerver of many copies of the Greek claſſics, in the havock of the religious houſes. It is recorded by Fox, the martyrologiſt, as a memorable occurrence [s], and very deſervedly, that about the ſame time, Robert Barnes, prior of the Auguſtines at Cambridge, and educated at Louvain, with the aſſiſtance of his ſcholar Thomas Parnell, explained within the walls of his own monaſtery, Plautus, Terence, and Cicero, to thoſe academics who ſaw the utility of philology, and were deſirous of deſerting the Gothic philoſophy. It may ſeem at firſt ſurpriſing, that Fox, a weak and prejudiced writer, ſhould allow any merit to a catholic: but Barnes afterwards appears to have been one of Fox's martyrs, and was executed at the ſtake in Smithfield for a defence of Lutheraniſm.

But theſe innovations in the ſyſtem of ſtudy were greatly diſcouraged and oppoſed by the friends of the old ſcholaſtic circle of ſciences, and the bigotted partiſans of the catholic communion, who ſtigmatiſed the Greek language by the name of hereſy. Even biſhop Fox, when he founded the

[r] Wakefield's ORATIO DE LAUDIBUS TRIUM LINGUARUM, &c. Dated at Cambridge, 1524. Printed for W. de Worde, 4to. *Signat.* C. ii. See alſo FAST. Acad. Lovan. by Val. Andreas, p. 284. edit. 1650.

[s] ACT. MON. fol. 1192. edit. 1583.

Greek

Greek lecture abovementioned, that he might not appear to countenance a dangerous novelty, was obliged to cover his excellent inſtitution under the venerable mantle of the authority of the church. For as a ſeeming apology for what he had done, he refers to a canonical decree of pope Clement the fifth, promulged in the year 1311, at Vienne in Dauphine, which enjoined, that profeſſors of Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, ſhould be inſtituted in the univerſities of Oxford, Paris, Bononia, Salamanca, and in the cout of Rome [t]. It was under the force of this eccleſiaſtical conſtitution, that Gregory Typhernas, one of the learned Greek exiles, had the addreſs to claim a ſtipend for teaching Greek in the univerſity of Paris [u]. We cannot but wonder at the ſtrange diſagreement in human affairs between cauſe and effect, when we conſider, that this edict of pope Clement, which originated from a ſuperſtitious reverence annexed to two of theſe languages, becauſe they compoſed part of the ſuperſcription on the croſs of Chriſt, ſhould have ſo ſtrongly counteracted its own principles, and proved an inſtrument in the reformation of religion.

The univerſity of Oxford was rent into factions on account of theſe bold attempts; and the advocates of the recent improvements, when the gentler weapons of perſuaſion could not prevail, often proceeded to blows with the rigid champions of the ſchools. But the facetious diſpoſition of

[t] "Quem præterea in noſtro Alveario "collocavimus, quod SACROSANCTI CA-"NONES commodiſſime pro bonis literis, "et imprimis chriſtianis, inſtituerunt ac "juſſerunt, eum in hac univerſitate Ox-"onienſi, perinde ac paucis aliis celeber-"rimis gymnaſiis, nunquam deſiderari." STATUT. C. C. C. Oxon. ut ſupr. The words of this ſtatute which immediately follow, deſerve notice here, and require explanation. "Nec tamen Eos hac ratione "excuſatos volumus, qui Græcam lectio-"nem in eo SUIS IMPENSIS ſuſtentare "debent." By Eos, he means the biſhops and abbots of England, who are the perſons particularly ordered in pope Clement's injunction to ſuſtain theſe lectures in the univerſity of Oxford. Biſhop Fox, therefore, in founding a Greek lecture, would be underſtood, that he does not mean to abſolve or excuſe the other prelates of England from doing their proper duty in this neceſſary buſineſs. At the ſame time a charge on their negligence ſeems to be implied.

[u] Naud. i. 3. p. 234. This was in 1472.

ſir

ſir Thomas More had no ſmall ſhare in deciding this ſingular controverſy, which he treated with much ingenious ridicule [w]. Eraſmus, about the ſame time, was engaged in attempting theſe reformations at Cambridge: in which, notwithſtanding the mildneſs of his temper and conduct, and the general luſtre of his literary character, he met with the moſt obſtinate oppoſition. He expounded the Greek grammar of Chryſoloras in the public ſchools without an audience [x]: and having, with a view to preſent the Grecian literature in the moſt ſpecious and agreeable form by a piece of pleaſantry, tranſlated Lucian's lively dialogue called ICAROMENIPPUS, he could find no ſtudent in the univerſity capable of tranſcribing the Greek with the Latin [y]. His edition of the Greek teſtament, the moſt commodious that had yet appeared, was abſolutely proſcribed at Cambridge: and a programma was iſſued in one of the moſt ample colleges, threatening a ſevere fine to any member of the ſociety, who ſhould be detected in having ſo fantaſtic and impious a book in his poſſeſſion [z]. One Henry Standiſh, a doctor in divinity and a mendicant frier, afterwards biſhop of ſaint Aſaph, was a vehement adverſary of Eraſmus in the promotion of this heretical literature; whom he called in a declamation, by way of reproach, *Græculus iſte*, which ſoon became a ſynonymous appellation for an heretic [a]. Yet it ſhould be remembered, that many Engliſh prelates patroniſed Eraſmus; and that one of our archbiſhops was at this time ambitious of learning Greek [b].

[w] See, among other proofs, his EPISTOLA *Scholaſticis quibuſdam Trojanos ſe appellantibus*, publiſhed by Hearne, 1716, 8vo.

[x] Eraſmi EPIST. Ammonio, dat. 1512. Ep. 123. Op. tom. iii. p. 110.

[y] Ibid. EPIST. 139. dat. 1512. p. 120. Henry Bullock, called Bovillus, one of Eraſmus's friends, and much patroniſed by Wolſey, printed a Latin tranſlation of Lucian, περὶ Διψάδων, at Cambridge, 1521, quarto.

[z] Ibid. EPIST. 148. dat. 1513. p. 126.

[a] See Eraſmi OPERA. tom. ix. p. 1440. Even the prieſts, in their confeſſions of young ſcholars, cautioned againſt this growing evil. "Cave a *Græcis* ne fias *hæreticus*." Eraſm. ADAG. Op. ii. 993.

[b] Eraſm. EPIST. 301.

Even

Even the public diverſions of the court took a tincture from this growing attention to the languages, and aſſumed a claſſical air. We have before ſeen, that a comedy of Plautus was acted at the royal palace of Greenwich in the year 1520. And when the French ambaſſadors with a moſt ſplendid ſuite of the French nobility were in England for the ratification of peace in the year 1514, amid the moſt magnificent banquets, tournaments, and maſques, exhibited at the ſame palace, they were entertained with a Latin interlude; or, to uſe the words of a cotemporary writer, with ſuch an "excellent Interlude made in Latin, that I never "heard the like; the actors apparel being ſo gorgious, and "of ſuch ſtrange devices, that it paſſes my capacitie to relate "them [c]."

Nor was the protection of king Henry the eighth, who notwithſtanding he had attacked the opinions of Luther, yet, from his natural livelineſs of temper and a love of novelty, thought favourably of the new improvements, of inconſiderable influence in ſupporting the reſtoration of the Greek language. In 1519, a preacher at the public church of the univerſity of Oxford, harangued with much violence, and in the true ſpirit of the antient orthodoxy, againſt the doctrines inculcated by the new profeſſors: and his arguments were canvaſſed among the ſtudents with the greateſt animoſity. But Henry, being reſident at the neighbouring royal manor of Woodſtock, and having received a juſt detail of the merits of this diſpute from Pace and More, interpoſed his uncontrovertible authority; and tranſmitting a royal mandate to the univerſity, commanded that the ſtudy of the ſcriptures in their original languages ſhould not only be permitted for the future, but received as a branch of the academical inſtitution [d]. Soon afterwards, one of the king's

[c] Cavendiſh, MEM. Card. Wolſey, p. 94. edit. 1708. 8vo.

[d] Eraſm. EPIST. 380. tom. iii.

chaplains

chaplains preaching at court, took an opportunity to cenſure the genuine interpretations of the ſcriptures, which the Grecian learning had introduced. The king, when the ſermon was ended, to which he had liſtened with a ſmile of contempt, ordered a ſolemn diſputation to be held, in his own preſence: at which the unfortunate preacher oppoſed, and ſir Thomas More, with his uſual dexterity, defended, the utility and excellence of the Greek language. The divine, who at leaſt was a good courtier, inſtead of vindicating his opinion, inſtantly fell on his knees, and begged pardon for having given any offence in the pulpit before his majeſty. However, after ſome ſlight altercation, the preacher, by way of making ſome ſort of conceſſion in form, ingenuouſly declared, that he was now better reconciled to the Greek tongue, becauſe it was derived from the Hebrew. The king, aſtoniſhed at his ridiculous ignorance, diſmiſſed the chaplain, with a charge, that he ſhould never again preſume to preach at court [e]. In the grammatical ſchools eſtabliſhed in all the new cathedral foundations of this king, a maſter is appointed, with the uncommon qualification of a competent ſkill in both the learned languages [f]. In the year 1523, Ludovicus Vives, having dedicated his commentary on Auſtin's De Civitate Dei to Henry the eighth, was invited into England, and read lectures at Oxford in juriſprudence and humanity; which were countenanced by the preſence, not only of Henry, but of queen Catharine and ſome of the principal nobility [g]. At length antient abſurdities univerſally gave way to theſe encouragements. Even the vernacular lan-

[e] Ibid. p. 408.

[f] Statuimus præterea, ut per Decanum, etc. unus. [Archididaſcalus] "eligatur, Latine et *Græce* doctus, bonæ famæ, &c." Statut. Eccleſ. Roffenſ. cap. xxv. They were given Jun. 30, 1545. In the ſame ſtatute the ſecond maſter is required to be only *Latine doctus*. All the ſtatutes of the new cathedrals are alike. It is remarkable, that Wolſey does not order Greek to be taught in his ſchool at Ipſwich, founded 1528. See Strype, Eccl. Mem. i. Append. xxxv. p. 94. ſeq.

[g] Twyne, Apol. lib. ii. §. 210. ſeq. Probaby he was patroniſed by Catharine as a Spaniard.

guage

guage began to be cultivated by the more ingenious clergy. Colet, dean of ſaint Paul's, a divine of profound learning, with a view to adorn and improve the ſtyle of his diſcourſes, and to acquire the graces of an elegant preacher, employed much time in reading Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate, and other Engliſh poets, whoſe compoſitions had embelliſhed the popular diction[h]. The practice of frequenting Italy, for the purpoſe of acquiring the laſt poliſh to a Latin ſtyle both in eloquence and poetry, ſtill continued in vogue; and was greatly promoted by the connections, authority, and good taſte, of cardinal Pole, who conſtantly reſided at the court of Rome in a high character. At Oxford, in particular, theſe united endeavours for eſtabliſhing a new courſe of liberal and manly ſcience, were finally conſummated in the magnificent foundation of Wolſey's college, to which all the accompliſhed ſcholars of every country in Europe were invited; and for whoſe library, tranſcripts of all the valuable manuſcripts which now fill the Vatican, were deſigned[i].

But the progreſs of theſe proſperous beginnings was ſoon obſtructed. The firſt obſtacle I ſhall mention, was, indeed, but of ſhort duration. It was however an unfavourable circumſtance, that in the midſt of this career of ſcience, Henry, who had ever been accuſtomed to gratify his paſſions at any rate, ſued for a divorce againſt his queen Catharine. The legality of this violent meaſure being agitated with much deliberation and ſolemnity, wholly engroſſed the attention of many able philologiſts, whoſe genius and acquiſitions were deſtined to a much nobler employment; and tended to revive for a time the frivolous ſubtleties of caſuiſtry and theology.

But another cauſe which ſuſpended the progreſſion of theſe letters, of much more importance and extent, ultimately moſt

[h] Eraſm. Epistol. Jodoco Jonæ. Jun. 1521. Ibid.

[i] Wood, Hist. Univ. Oxon, i. 249.

happy in its conſequences, remains to be mentioned. The enlarged conceptions acquired by the ſtudy of the Greek and Roman writers ſeem to have reſtored to the human mind a free exertion of its native operations, and to have communicated a certain ſpirit of enterpriſe in examining every ſubject: and at length to have releaſed the intellectual capacity of mankind from that habitual ſubjection, and that ſervility to ſyſtem, which had hitherto prevented it from advancing any new principle, or adopting any new opinion. Hence, under the concurrent aſſiſtance of a preparation of circumſtances, all centering in the ſame period, aroſe the reformation of religion. But this defection from the catholic communion, alienated the thoughts of the learned from thoſe purſuits by which it was produced; and diverted the ſtudies of the moſt accompliſhed ſcholars, to inquiries into the practices and maxims of the primitive ages, the nature of civil and eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction, the authority of ſcripture and tradition, of popes, councils, and ſchoolmen: topics, which men were not yet qualified to treat with any degree of penetration, and on which the ideas of the times unenlightened by philoſophy, or warped by prejudice and paſſion, were not calculated to throw juſt and rational illuſtrations. When the bonds of ſpiritual unity were once broken, this ſeparation from an eſtabliſhed faith ended in a variety of ſubordinate ſects, each of which called forth its reſpective champions into the field of religious contention. The ſeveral princes of chriſtendom were politically concerned in theſe diſputes; and the courts in which poets and orators had been recently careſſed and rewarded, were now filled with that moſt deplorable ſpecies of philoſophers, polemical metaphyſicians. The public entry of Luther into Worms, when he had been ſummoned before the diet of that city, was equally ſplendid with that of the emperor Charles the fifth[k]. Rome in re-

[k] Luther, Op. ii. 412. 414.

turn,

turn, rouſed from her deep repoſe of ten centuries, was compelled to vindicate her inſulted doctrines with reaſoning and argument. The profound inveſtigations of Aquinas once more triumphed over the graces of the Ciceronian urbanity; and endleſs volumes were written on the expediency of auricular confeſſion, and the exiſtence of purgatory. Thus the cauſe of polite literature was for awhile abandoned; while the nobleſt abilities of Europe were waſted in theological ſpeculation, and abſorbed in the abyſs of controverſy. Yet it muſt not be forgotten, that wit and raillery, drawn from the ſources of elegant erudition, were ſometimes applied, and with the greateſt ſucceſs, in this important diſpute. The lively colloquies of Eraſmus, which expoſed the ſuperſtitious practices of the papiſts, with much humour, and in pure Latinity, made more proteſtants than the ten tomes of John Calvin. A work of ridicule was now a new attempt: and it ſhould be here obſerved, to the honour of Eraſmus, that he was the firſt of the literary reformers who tried that ſpecies of compoſition, at leaſt with any degree of popularity. The polite ſcholars of Italy had no notion that the German theologiſts were capable of making their readers laugh: they were now convinced of their miſtake, and ſoon found that the German pleaſantry prepared the way for a revolution, which proved of the moſt ſerious conſequence to Italy.

Another great temporary check given to the general ſtate of letters in England at this period, was the diſſolution of the monaſteries. Many of the abuſes in civil ſociety are attended with ſome advantages. In the beginnings of reformation, the loſs of theſe advantages is always felt very ſenſibly: while the benefit ariſing from the change is the ſlow effect of time, and not immediately perceived or enjoyed. Scarce any inſtitution can be imagined leſs favorable to the intereſts of mankind than the monaſtic. Yet theſe ſeminaries, although they were in a general view the nur-

ſeries of illiterate indolence, and undoubtedly deſerved to be ſuppreſſed under proper reſtrictions, contained invitations and opportunities to ſtudious leiſure and literary purſuits. On this event therefore, a viſible revolution and decline in the national ſtate of learning ſucceeded. Moſt of the youth of the kingdom betook themſelves to mechanical or other illiberal employments, the profeſſion of letters being now ſuppoſed to be without ſupport and reward. By the abolition of the religious houſes, many towns and their adjacent villages were utterly deprived of their only means of inſtruction. At the beginning of the reign of queen Elizabeth, Williams, ſpeaker of the houſe of commons, complained to her majeſty, that more than an hundred flouriſhing ſchools were deſtroyed in the demolition of the monaſteries, and that ignorance had prevailed ever ſince[l]. Provincial ignorance, at leaſt, became univerſal, in conſequence of this haſty meaſure of a rapacious and arbitrary prince. What was taught in the monaſteries, was not always perhaps of the greateſt importance, but ſtill it ſerved to keep up a certain degree of neceſſary knowledge[m]. Nor ſhould it be forgot, that many of the abbots were learned,

[l] Strype, ANN. REF. p. 292. ſub ann. 1562. The greater abbies appear to have had the direction of other ſchools in their neighbourhood. In an abbatial Regiſter of Bury abbey there is this entry. "Memorand. quod. A. D. 1418. 28 Jul. "Gulielmus abbas contulit regimen et "magiſterium ſcholarum grammaticalium "in villa de Bury S. Edmundi magiſtro "Johanni Somerſet, artium et grammaticæ "profeſſori, et baccalaureo in medicina, "cum annua penſione xl. ſolidorum." MS. Cotton. TIBER. B. ix. 2. This John Somerſet was tutor and phyſician to king Henry the ſixth, and a man of eminent learning. He was inſtrumental in procuring duke Humphrey's books to be conveyed to Oxford. Regiſtr. Acad. Oxon. EPIST. F. 179. 202. 218. 220. And in the foundation of King's college at Cambridge, MSS. COTT. JULIUS, F. vii. 43.

[m] I do not, however, lay great ſtreſs on the following paſſage, which yet deſerves attention, in Roſſe of Warwickſhire, who wrote about the year 1480: "To this "day, in the cathedrals and ſome of the "greater collegiate churches, or monaſte-"ries, [quibuſdam nobilibus collegiis,] and "in the houſes of the four mendicant or-"ders, uſeful lectures and diſputations are "kept up; and ſuch of their members as "are thought capable of degrees, are ſent "to the univerſities. And in towns where "there are two or more fraternities of "mendicants, in each of theſe are held, "every week by turns, proper exerciſes of "ſcholars in diſputation." HIST. REG. ANGL. edit. Hearne, p. 74. [See ſupr. p. 340.]

and

and patrons of literature; men of public ſpirit, and liberal views. By their connections with parliament, and the frequent embaſſies to foreign courts in which they were employed, they became acquainted with the world, and the improvements of life: and, knowing where to chuſe proper objects, and having no other uſe for the ſuperfluities of their vaſt revenues, encouraged in their reſpective circles many learned young men. It appears to have been cuſtomary for the governors of the moſt conſiderable convents, eſpecially thoſe that were honoured with the mitre, to receive into their own private lodgings the ſons of the principal families of the neighbourhood for education. About the year 1450, Thomas Bromele, abbot of the mitred monaſtery of Hyde near Wincheſter, entertained in his own abbatial houſe within that monaſtery, eight young gentlemen, or *gentiles pueri*, who were placed there for the purpoſe of literary inſtruction, and conſtantly dined at the abbot's table. I will not ſcruple to give the original words, which are more particular and expreſſive, of the obſcure record which preſerves this curious anecdote of monaſtic life. "Pro octo gentilibus "pueris apud dominum abbatem ſtudii cauſa perhendinan-"tibus, et ad menſam domini victitantibus, cum garcioni-"bus ſuis ipſos comitantibus, hoc anno, xvii l. ix s. Capi-"endo pro . . .[n]" This, by the way, was more extraordinary, as William of Wykeham's celebrated ſeminary was ſo near. And this ſeems to have been an eſtabliſhed practice of the abbot of Glaſtonbury: "whoſe apartment in the "abbey was a kind of well-diſciplined court, where the "ſons of noblemen and young gentlemen were wont to be "ſent for virtuous education, who returned thence home "excellently accompliſhed[o]." Richard Whiting, the laſt

[n] From a fragment of the COMPUTUS CAMERARII Abbat. Hidenſ. in Archiv. Wulveſ. apud Winton, ut ſupr.

[o] HIST. and ANTIQ. of GLASTONBURY, Oxon. 1722. 8vo. p. 98.

abbot

abbot of Glaſtonbury, who was cruelly executed by the king, during the courſe of his government, educated near three hundred ingenuous youths, who conſtituted a part of his family: beſide many others whom he liberally ſupported at the univerſities [p]. Whitgift, the moſt excellent and learned archbiſhop of Canterbury in the reign of queen Elizabeth, was educated under Robert Whitgift his uncle, abbot of the Auguſtine monaſtery of black canons at Wellhow in Lincolnſhire: who, "ſays Strype, had ſeveral other young "gentlemen under his care for education [q]." That, at the reſtoration of literature, many of theſe dignitaries were eminently learned, and even zealous promoters of the new improvements, I could bring various inſtances. Hugh Farringdon, the laſt abbot of Reading, was a polite ſcholar, as his Latin epiſtles addreſſed to the univerſity of Oxford abundantly teſtify [r]. Nor was he leſs a patron of critical ſtudies. Leonard Coxe, a popular philological writer in the reign of Henry the eighth, both in Latin and Engliſh, and a great traveller, highly celebrated by the judicious Leland for his elegant accompliſhments in letters, and honoured with the affectionate correſpondence of Eraſmus, dedicates to this abbot, his ARTE OR CRAFTE OF RHETORICKE, printed in the year 1524, at that time a work of an unuſual nature [s]. Wakefield abovementioned, a very capital Greek and oriental ſcholar, in his DISCOURSE ON THE EXCELLENCY AND UTILITY OF THE THREE LANGUAGES, written in the year 1524, celebrates William Fryſſell, prior of the cathedral Benedictine convent at Rocheſter, as a diſtinguiſhed judge and encourager of critical literature [t]. Robert Shirwoode, an Engliſhman, but a profeſſor of Greek and Hebrew at Louvaine,

[p] Reyner, APOSTOLAT. BENEDICT. Tract. i. ſect. ii. p. 224. Sanders de SCHISM. pag. 176.

[q] Strype's WHITGIFT, b. i. ch. i. p. 3.

[r] Regiſtr. Univ. Oxon. F. F. fol. 101. — 125.

[s] See Leland, COLLECTAN. vol. 5. p. 118. vol. 6. p. 187. And ENCOM. p. 50. edit. 1589. Eraſm. EPISTOL. p. 886.

[t] Cited above, p. 124.

publiſhed

publiſhed a new Latin tranſlation of ECCLESIASTES, with critical annotations on the Hebrew text, printed at Antwerp in 1523 [u]. This, in an elegant Latin epiſtle, he dedicates to John Webbe, prior of the Benedictine cathedral convent at Coventry; whom he ſtyles, for his ſingular learning, and attention to the general cauſe of letters, MONACHORUM DECUS. John Batmanſon, prior of the Carthuſians in London, controverted Eraſmus's commentary on the new Teſtament with a degee of ſpirit and erudition, which was unhappily miſapplied, and would have done honour to the cauſe of his antagoniſt [w]. He wrote many other pieces; and was patroniſed by Lee, a learned archbiſhop of York, who oppoſed Eraſmus, but allowed Aſcham a penſion [x]. Kederminſter, abbot of Winchcombe in Glouceſterſhire, a traveller to Rome, and a celebrated preacher before king Henry the eighth, eſtabliſhed regular lectures in his monaſtery, for explaining both ſcriptures in their original languages; which were ſo generally frequented, that his little cloiſter acquired the name and reputation of a new univerſity [y]. He was maſter of a terſe and perſpicuous Latin ſtyle, as appears from a fragment of the HISTORY OF WYNCHCOMB ABBEY, written by himſelf [z]. His erudition is atteſted in an epiſtle from the univerſity to king Henry the eighth [a]. Longland, biſhop of Lincoln, the moſt eloquent preacher of his time,

[u] Quarto.

[w] Theodor. Petreus, BIBL. CARTHUS. edit. Col. 1609. p. 157.

[x] Aſcham, EPISTOL. lib. ii. p. 77. a. edit. 1581. [See alſo iii. p. 86. a.] On the death of the archbiſhop, in 1544, Aſcham deſires, that a part of his penſion then due might be paid out of ſome of the archbiſhop's greek books: one of theſe he wiſhes may be Aldus's DECEM RHETORES GRÆCI, a book which he could not purchaſe or procure at Cambridge.

[y] "Non aliter quam ſi fuiſſet altera NOVA UNIVERSITAS, tametſi exigua, clauſtrum Wynchelcombenſe tunc temporis ſe habere." From his own HISTORIA, as below. Wood, HIST. Univ. OXON. i. p. 248. There is an Epiſtle from Colet, the learned dean of St. Paul's, to this abbot, concerning a paſſage in ſaint Paul's EPISTLES, firſt printed by Knight, from the original manuſcript at Cambridge. Knight's LIFE, p. 311.

[z] Printed by Dugdale, before the whole of the original was deſtroyed in the fire of London. MONAST. i. 188. But a tranſcript of a part remains in Dodſworth, MSS. Bibl. Bodl. lxv. 1. Compare A. Wood, ut ſupr. and ATHEN. OXON. i. 28.

[a] Regiſtr. Univ. Oxon. FF. fol. 46.

in

in the dedication to Kederminſter, of five quadrageſimal ſermons, delivered at court, and printed by Pinſon in the year 1517, inſiſts largely on his SINGULARIS ERUDITIO, and other ſhining qualifications.

Before we quit the reign of Henry the eighth, in this review of the riſe of modern letters, let us turn our eyes once more on the univerſities; which yet do not always give the tone to the learning of a nation [b]. In the year 1531, the learned Simon Grynaeus viſited Oxford. By the intereſt of Clay-

[b] It ought not here to be unnoticed, that the royal library of the kings of England, originally ſubſiſting in the old palace at Weſtminſter, and lately transferred to the Britiſh Muſeum, received great improvements under the reign of Henry the eighth; who conſtituted that elegant and judicious ſcholar, John Leland, his librarian, about the year 1530. Tanner, BIBL. pag. 475. Leland, at the diſſolution of the monaſteries, removed to this royal repoſitory a great number of valuable manuſcripts; particularly from ſaint Auſtin's abbey at Canterbury, SCRIPT. BRIT. p. 299. One of theſe was a manuſcript given by Athelſtan to that convent, a HARMONY of the FOUR GOSPELS. Bibl. Reg. MSS. i. A. xviii. See the hexaſthic of Leland prefixed. See alſo SCRIPT. BRIT. ut ſupra, V. ATHELSTANUS. Leland ſays, that he placed in the PALATINE library of Henry the eighth the COMMENTARII IN MATTHÆUM of Claudius, Bede's diſciple. Ibid. V. CLAUDIUS. Many of the manuſcripts of this library appear to have belonged to Henry's predeceſſors; and if we may judge from the ſplendour of the decorations, were preſents. Some of them bear the name of Humphrey duke of Gloceſter. Others were written at the command of Edward the fourth. I have already mentioned the librarian of Henry the ſeventh. Bartholomew Traheron, a learned divine, was appointed the keeper of this library by Edward the ſixth, with a ſalary of twenty marcs, in the year 1549. See Rymer's FŒD. xv. p. 351. Under the reign of Eliſabeth, Hentzner, a German traveller, who ſaw this library at Whitehall in 1598, ſays, that it was well furniſhed with Greek, Latin, Italian, and French books, all bound in velvet of different colours, yet chiefly red, with claſps of gold and ſilver; and that the covers of ſome were adorned with pearls and precious ſtones. ITINERAR. *Germaniæ, Angliæ*, &c. Noringb. 1629. 8vo. p. 188. It is a great miſtake, that James the firſt was the firſt of our kings who founded a library in any of the royal palaces; and that this eſtabliſhment commenced at St. James's palace, under the patronage of that monarch. This notion was firſt propagated by Smith in his life of Patrick Junius, Vit. QUORUND. etc. Lond. 1707. 4to. pp. 12. 13. 34. 35. Great part of the royal library, which indeed migrated to St. James's under James the firſt, was partly ſold and diſperſed, at Cromwell's acceſſion: together with another ineſtimable part of its furniture, 12000 medals, rings, and gems, the entire collection of Gorlæus's DACTYLIOTHECA, purchaſed by prince Henry and Charles the firſt. It muſt be allowed, that James the firſt greatly enriched this library with the books of lord Lumley and Caſaubon, and ſir Thomas Roe's manuſcripts brought from Conſtantinople. Lord Lumley's chiefly conſiſted of lord Arundel's, his father in law, a great collector at the diſſolution of monaſteries. James had previouſly granted a warrant to ſir Thomas Bodley, in 1613, to chuſe any books from the royal library at Whitehall, over the *Queen's Chamber*. [RELIQ. BODL. p. Hearne, p. 205. 286. 320.]

mund,

mund, preſident of Corpus Chriſti college, an admirable ſcholar, a critical writer, and the general friend and correſpondent of the literary reformers, he was admitted to all the libraries of the univerſity; which, he ſays, were about twenty in number, and amply furniſhed with the books of antiquity. Among theſe he found numerous manuſcripts of Proclus on Plato, many of which he was eaſily permitted to carry abroad by the governors of the colleges, who did not know the value of theſe treaſures [c]. In the year 1535, the king ordered lectures in humanity, inſtitutions which have their uſe for a time, and while the novelty laſts, to be founded in thoſe colleges of the univerſity, where they were yet wanting: and theſe injunctions were ſo warmly approved by the ſcholars in the largeſt ſocieties, that they ſeized on the venerable volumes of Duns Scotus and other irrefragable logicians, in which they had ſo long toiled without the attainment of knowledge, and tearing them in pieces, diſperſed them in great triumph about their quadrangles, or gave them away as uſeleſs lumber [d]. The king himſelf alſo eſtabliſhed ſome public lectures with large endowments [e]. Notwithſtanding, the number of ſtudents at Oxford daily decreaſed: inſomuch, that in 1546, not becauſe a general cultivation of the new ſpecies of literature was increaſed, there were only ten inceptors in arts, and three in theology and juriſprudence [f].

As all novelties are purſued to exceſs, and the moſt beneficial improvements often introduce new inconveniencies, ſo this univerſal attention to polite literature deſtroyed philo-

[c] During his abode in England, having largely experienced the bounty and advice of ſir Thomas More, he returned home, fraught with materials which he had long ſought in vain, and publiſhed his PLATO, viz. "Platonis Opera, cum commentariis Procli "in Timæum et Politica, Baſil. 1534." fol. See the EPISTLE DEDICATORY to ſir Thomas More. He there mentions other pieces of Proclus, which he ſaw at Oxford.

[d] See Dr. Layton's letter to Cromwell. Strype's ECCL. MEM. i. 210.

[e] Wood, HIST. Univ. Oxon. i. 26. ii. 36.

[f] Wood, ibid. ſub anno.

ſophy. The old philoſophy was aboliſhed, but a new one was not adopted in its ſtead. At Cambridge we now however find the antient ſcientific learning in ſome degree reformed, by the admiſſion of better ſyſtems.

In the injunctions given by Henry to that univerſity in the year 1535, for the reformation of ſtudy, the dialectics of Rodolphus Agricola, the great favorite of Eraſmus, and the genuine logic of Ariſtotle, are preſcribed to be taught, inſtead of the barren problems of Scotus and Burlaeus [g]. By the ſame edict, theology and cauſuiſtry were freed from many of their old incumbrances and perplexities: degrees in the canon law were forbidden; and heavy penalties were impoſed on thoſe academics, who relinquiſhed the ſacred text, to explain the tedious and unedifying commentaries on Peter Lombard's ſcholaſtic cyclopede of divinity, called the SENTENCES, which alone were ſufficient to conſtitute a moderate library. Claſſical lectures were alſo directed, the ſtudy of words was enforced, and the books of Melancthon, and other ſolid and elegant writers of the reformed party, recommended. The politer ſtudies, ſoon afterwards, ſeem to have riſen into a flouriſhing ſtate at Cambridge. Biſhop Latimer complains, that there were now but few who ſtudied divinity in that univerſity [h]. But this is no proof of a decline of learning in that ſeminary. Other purſuits were now gaining ground there; and ſuch as in fact were ſubſervient to theological truth, and to the propagation of the reformed religion. Latimer himſelf, whoſe diſcourſes from the royal pulpit appear to be barbarous beyond their age, in ſtyle, manner, and argument, is an example of the neceſſity of the ornamental ſtudies to a writer in divinity. The

[g] Collier, ECCLES. HIST. vol. ii. p. 110.

[h] SERMONS, &c. p. 63. Lond. 1584. 4to. Sermon before Edward the ſixth, in the year 1550. His words are, "It would "pitty a man's heart to hear that I hear of "the ſtate of Cambridge: what it is in "Oxford I cannot tell. There be few that "ſtudy divinity but ſo many as of neceſſitie "muſt furniſh the colledges."

Greek

Greek language was now making conſiderable advances at Cambridge, under the inſtruction of Cheke and Smith; notwithſtanding the interruptions and oppoſition of biſhop Gardiner, the chancellor of the univerſity, who loved learning but hated novelties, about the proprieties of pronunciation. But the controverſy which was agitated on both ſides with much erudition, and produced letters between Cheke and Gardiner equal to large treatiſes, had the good effect of more fully illuſtrating the point in debate, and of drawing the general attention to the ſubject of the Greek literature[l]. Perhaps biſhop Gardiner's intolerance in this reſpect was like his perſecuting ſpirit in religion, which only made more heretics. Aſcham obſerves, with no ſmall degree of triumph, that inſtead of Plautus, Cicero, Terence, and Livy, almoſt the only claſſics hitherto known at Cambridge, a more extenſive field was opened; and that Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Demoſthenes, Xenophon, an Iſocrates, were univerſally and critically ſtudied[k]. But Cheke being ſoon called away to the court, his auditors relapſed into diſſertations on the doctrines of original ſin and predeſtination; and it was debated with great obſtinacy and acrimony, whether thoſe topics had been moſt ſucceſsfully handled by ſome modern German divines or ſaint Auſtin[l]. Aſcham obſerves, that at Oxford, a decline of taſte in both languages was indicated, by a preference of Lucian, Plutarch, and Herodian, in Greek, and of Seneca, Gellius, and Apuleius, in Latin, to the more pure, antient, and original writers, of Greece and Rome[m]. At length,

[l] Aſcham. EPISTOL. ut modo inſr. p. 65. a. Aſcham calls Gardiner, "omnibus literarum, prudentiæ, conſilii, authoritatis, præſidiis ornatiſſimus, *abſque hac una re eſſet*, literarum et academiæ noſtræ patronus ampliſſimus." But he ſays, that Gardiner took this meaſure, "quorundam *invidorum hominum* precibus victus." ibid. p. 64. b.

[k] Strype's CRANMER, p. 170. Aſcham. EPISTOL. L. ii. p. 64. b. 1581.

[l] Aſcham. EPIST. lib. ii.

[m] EPISTOL. lib. i. p. 18. b. Dat. 1550. edit. 1581.

both univerſities ſeem to have been reduced to the ſame deplorable condition of indigence and illiteracy.

It is generally believed, that the reformation of religion in England, the moſt happy and important event of our annals, was immediately ſucceeded by a flouriſhing ſtate of letters. But this was by no means the caſe. For a long time afterwards an effect quite contrary was produced. The reformation in England was completed under the reign of Edward the ſixth. The rapacious courtiers of this young prince were perpetually graſping at the rewards of literature; which being diſcouraged or deſpiſed by the rich, was neglected by thoſe of moderate fortunes. Avarice and zeal were at once gratified in robbing the clergy of their revenues, and in reducing the church to its primitive apoſtolical ſtate of purity and poverty [n]. The opulent ſee of Wincheſter was lowered to a bare title: its ampleſt eſtates were portioned out to the laity; and the biſhop, a creature of the protector Somerſet, was contented to receive an inconſiderable annual ſtipend from the exchequer. The biſhoprick of Durham, almoſt equally rich, was entirely diſſolved. A favorite nobleman of the court occupied the deanery and treaſurerſhip of a cathedral with ſome of its beſt canonries [o]. The miniſters of this abuſed monarch, by theſe arbitrary, diſhoneſt, and imprudent meaſures, only provided inſtruments, and furniſhed arguments, for reſtoring in the ſucceeding reign that ſuperſtitious religion, which they profeſſed to deſtroy. By thus impoveriſhing the eccleſiaſtical dignities, they countenanced the clamours of the catholics; who declared, that the reformation was apparently founded on temporal views, and that the proteſtants pretended to oppoſe the doctrines of the church, ſolely with a view that they might ſhare in the plunder of its revenues. In every one of theſe ſacrilegious robberies the intereſt of

[n] See Collier's Eccl. Hist. Records, lxvii. p. 80. [o] Burnet, Ref. P. ii. 8.

learning

learning alſo ſuffered. Exhibitions and penſions were, in the mean time, ſubſtracted from the ſtudents in the univerſities [p]. Aſcham, in a letter to the marquis of Northampton, dated 1550, laments the ruin of grammar ſchools throughout England; and predicts the ſpeedy extinction of the univerſities from this growing calamity [q]. At Oxford the public ſchools were neglected by the profeſſors and pupils, and allotted to the loweſt purpoſes [r]. Academical degrees were abrogated as antichriſtian [s]. Reformation was ſoon turned into fanaticiſm. Abſurd refinements, concerning the inutility of human learning, were ſuperadded to the juſt and rational purgation of chriſtianity from the papal corruptions. The ſpiritual reformers of theſe enlightened days, at a viſitation of the laſt-mentioned univerſity, proceeded ſo far in their ideas of a ſuperior rectitude, as totally to ſtrip the public library, eſtabliſhed by that munificent patron Humphrey duke of Glouceſter, of all its books and manuſcripts [t].

I muſt not, however, forget, as a remarkable ſymptom of an attempt now circulating to give a more general and unreſerved diffuſion of ſcience, that in this reign, Thomas Wilſon, originally a fellow of King's college in Cambridge, preceptor to Charles and Henry Brandon dukes of Suffolk, dean of Durham, and chief ſecretary to the king, publiſhed a ſyſtem a rhetoric and of logic, in Engliſh [u]. This diſplay of the venerable myſteries of the latter of theſe arts in a vernacular language, which had hitherto been confined within the ſacred pale of the learned tongues, was eſteemed

[p] Wood, ſub ann. 1550. See alſo Strype's CRANMER, Append. N. xciii. p. 220. viz. A Letter to ſecretary Cecil, dat. 1552.

[q] EPISTOL. lib. un. COMMENDAT. p. 194. a. Lond. 1581. "Ruinam et interitum "publicarum ſcholarum, &c."—"Quam "gravis hæc univerſa ſcholarum calamitas, "&c." See p. 62. b. p. 210. a.

[r] Wood, ut ſupr. p. 273.

[s] Catal. MSS. ANGL. fol. edit. 1697. in Hiſt. Bibl. Bodl. Preſat.

[t] See ſupr. p. 44.

[u] Firſt printed in the reign of Edward the ſixth. See Preface to the ſecond edition of the RHETORIC, in 1560. He tranſlated the three Olynthiacs, and the four Philippics, of Demoſthenes, from the Greek into Engliſh. Lond. 1570. 4to.

an

an innovation almoſt equally daring with that of permitting the ſervice of the church to be celebrated in Engliſh: and accordingly the author, ſoon afterwards happening to viſit Rome, was incarcerated by the inquiſitors of the holy ſee, as a preſumptuous and dangerous heretic.

It is with reluctance I enter on the bloody reign of the relentleſs and unamiable Mary; whoſe many dreadful martyrdoms of men eminent for learning and piety, ſhock our ſenſibility with a double degree of horrour, in the preſent ſoftened ſtate of manners, at a period of ſociety when no potentate would inflict executions of ſo ſevere a nature, and when it would be difficult to find devotees hardy enough to die for difference of opinion. We muſt, however, acknowledge, that ſhe enriched both univerſities with ſome conſiderable benefactions: yet theſe donations ſeem to have been made, not from any general or liberal principle of advancing knowledge, but to repair the breaches of reformation, and to ſtrengthen the return of ſuperſtition. It is certain, that her reſtoration of popery, together with the monaſtic inſtitution, its proper appendage, muſt have been highly pernicious to the growth of polite erudition. Yet although the elegant ſtudies were now beginning to ſuffer a new relapſe, in the midſt of this reign, under the diſcouragement of all theſe inauſpicious and unfriendly circumſtances, a college was eſtabliſhed at Oxford, in the conſtitution of which, the founder principally inculcates the uſe and neceſſity of claſſical literature; and recommends it as the moſt important and leading object in that ſyſtem of academical ſtudy, which he preſcribes to the youth of the new ſociety*. For, beſide a lecturer in philoſophy appointed for the ordinary purpoſe of teaching the ſcholaſtic ſciences, he eſtabliſhes in this ſeminary a teacher of humanity. The buſineſs of this preceptor is deſcribed with a particularity not uſual in the con-

* In the year 1554.

ſtitutions

ſtitutions given to collegiate bodies of this kind, and he is directed to exert his utmoſt diligence, in tincturing his auditors with a juſt reliſh for the graces and purity of the Latin language [x]: and to explain critically, in the public hall, for the ſpace of two hours every day, the Offices, De Oratore, and rhetorical treatiſes of Cicero, the inſtitutes of Quintilian, Aulus Gellius, Plautus, Terence, Virgil, Horace, Livy, and Lucan; together with the moſt excellent modern philological treatiſes then in vogue, ſuch as the ELEGANCIES of Laurentius Valla, and the MISCELLANIES of Politian, or any other approved critical tract on oratory or verſification [y]. In the mean time, the founder permits it to the diſcretion of the lecturer, occaſionally to ſubſtitute Greek authors in the place of theſe [z]. He moreover requires, that the candidates for admiſſion into the college be completely ſkilled in Latin poetry; and in writing Epiſtles, then a favorite mode of compoſition [a], and on which Eraſmus [b], and Conradus Celtes the reſtorer of letters in Germany [c], had each recently publiſhed a diſtinct ſyſtematical work. He injoins, that the ſtudents ſhall be exerciſed every day, in the intervals of vacation, in compoſing declamations, and Latin verſes both

[x] "Latini ſermonis ornatu et elegantia "imbuendos diligenter curabit, &c." Statut. Coll. Trin. Oxon. cap. iv. Again; "Cupiens et ego Collegii mei juventutem "*in primis* Latini ſermonis *Puritate* ac "*ingenuarum* artium rudimentis, conve- "nienter erudiri, &c." Ibid. cap. xv.

[y] Ibid. cap. xv. A modern writer in dialectics, Rodolphus Agricola, is alſo recommended to be explained by the reader in philoſophy, together with Ariſtotle.

[z] Ibid. cap. xv. It may be alſo obſerved here, that the philoſophy reader is not only ordered to explain Ariſtotle, but Plato. Ibid. cap. xv. It appears by implication in the cloſe of this ſtatute, that the public lectures of the univerſity were now growing uſeleſs, and dwindling into mere matters of form, viz. "Ad hunc modum Domi meos "LECTIONIBUS erudiri cupiens, eos a "publicis in Academia lectionibus avocare "nolui.—Verum, ſi temporis tractu, et "magiſtratuum incuria, adeo a primario "inſtituto degenerent Magiſtrorum regen- "tium Lectiones ordinariæ, ut inde nulla, "aut admodum exigua, auditoribus acce- "dat utilitas, &c. Ibid. cap. xv.

[a] Ibid. cap. vii.

[b] DE RATIONE CONSCRIBENDI EPISTOLAS.

[c] About the year 1500. At Baſil, 1522. It was reprinted at Cambridge by Siberch, and dedicated to archbiſhop Fiſher, 1521. 4to.

lyric

lyric and heroic[d]: and in his prefatory ſtatute, where he deſcribes the nature and deſign of his foundation, he declares, that he deſtines the younger part of his eſtabliſhment, not only to dialectics and philoſophy, but to the more polite literature[e]. The ſtatutes of this college were ſubmitted to the inſpection of cardinal Pole, one of the chief protectors of the revival of polite letters in England, as appears from a curious paſſage in a letter written by the founder, now remaining; which not only diſplays the cardinal's ideas of the new erudition, but ſhews the ſtate of the Greek language at this period. "My lord Cardinalls grace has had the overſeeinge "of my ſtatutes. He muche lykes well, that I have therein "ordered the Latin tonge [Latin claſſics] to be redde to my "ſchollers. But he advyſes me to order the Greeke to be "more taught there than I have provyded. This purpoſe I "well lyke: but I fear *the tymes will not bear it now*. I re-"member when I was a yong ſcholler at Eton[f], the Greeke "tonge was growing apace; the ſtudie of which is now "alate much decaid[g]." Queen Mary was herſelf eminently learned. But her accompliſhments in letters were darkened or impeded by religious prejudices. At the deſire of queen Catharine Parr, ſhe tranſlated in her youth Eraſmus's paraphraſe on ſaint John. The preface is written by Udall, maſter of Eton ſchool: in which he much extolls her diſtinguiſhed proficience in literature[h]. It would have been fortunate, if Mary's attention to this work had ſoftened her temper, and enlightened her underſtanding. She frequently ſpoke in public with propriety, and always with prudence and dignity.

[d] Ibid. cap. xv. Every day after dinner "Aliquis ſcholarium, a Præſidente aut "Lectore Rhetorico juſſus, de themate "quodam propoſito, ad edendum *ingenii* "ac profectus ſui ſpecimen, diligenter, "*ornate*, ac breviter, dicat, &c." Ibid. cap. x.

[e] "Cæteri autem, *ſcholares* nuncupati, "POLITIORIBUS Literis, &c." Ibid. cap. i.

[f] About the year 1520.

[g] Dated 1556. See LIFE of ſir Thomas Pope, p. 226.

[h] Lond. 1548. fol.

In

In the beginning of the reign of queen Eliſabeth, which ſoon followed, when the return of proteſtantiſm might have been expected to produce a ſpeedy change for the better, puritaniſm began to prevail; and, as the firſt fervours of a new ſect are always violent, retarded for ſome time the progreſs of ingenuous and uſeful knowledge. The ſcriptures being tranſlated into Engliſh, and every man aſſuming a right to dictate in matters of faith, and to chuſe his own principles, weak heads drew falſe concluſions, and erected an infinite variety of petty religions. Such is the abuſe which attends the beſt deſigns, that the meaneſt reader of the new Teſtament thought he had a full comprehenſion of the moſt myſterious metaphyſical doctrines in the chriſtian faith; and ſcorned to acquieſce in the ſober and rational expoſitions of ſuch difficult ſubjects, which he might have received from a competent and intelligent teacher, whom it was his duty to follow. The bulk of the people, who now poſſeſſed the means of diſcuſſing all theological topics, from their ſituation and circumſtances in life, were naturally averſe to the ſplendor, the dominion, and the opulence of an hierarchy, and diſclaimed the yoke of epiſcopal juriſdiction. The new deliverance from the numerous and burthenſome ſuperſtitions of the papal communion, drove many pious reformers into the contrary extreme, and the rage of oppoſition ended in a devotion entirely ſpiritual and abſtracted. External forms were aboliſhed, as impediments to the viſionary reveries of a mental intercourſe with heaven; and becauſe the church of Rome had carried ceremonies to an abſurd exceſs, the uſe of any ceremonies was deemed unlawful. The love of new doctrines and a new worſhip, the triumph of gaining proſelytes, and the perſecutions which accompanied theſe licentious zealots, all contributed to fan the flame of enthuſiaſm. The genius of this refined and falſe ſpecies of religion, which defied the ſalutary checks of all human authority, when operating in its full force,

was attended with conſequences not leſs pernicious to ſociety, although leſs likely to laſt, than thoſe which flowed from the eſtabliſhment of the antient ſuperſtitions. During this unſettled ſtate of things, the Engliſh reformed clergy who had fled into Germany from the menaces of queen Mary, returned home in great numbers: and in conſideration of their ſufferings and learning, and their abilities to vindicate the principles of a national church erected in oppoſition to that of Rome, many of them were preferred to biſhopricks, and other eminent eccleſiaſtical ſtations. Theſe divines brought back with them into England thoſe narrow principles concerning church-government and ceremonies, which they had imbibed in the petty ſtates and republics abroad, where the Calviniſtic diſcipline was adopted, and where they had lived like a ſociety of philoſophers; but which were totally inconſiſtent with the nature of a more extended church, eſtabliſhed in a great and magnificent nation, and requiring an uniform ſyſtem of policy, a regular ſubordination of officers, a ſolemnity of public worſhip, and an obſervance of exterior inſtitutions. They were, however, in the preſent circumſtances, thought to be the moſt proper inſtruments to be employed at the head of eccleſiaſtical affairs; not only for the purpoſe of vindicating the new eſtabliſhment by argument and authority, but of eradicating every trace of the papal corruptions by their practice and example, and of effectually fixing the reformation embraced by the church of England on a durable baſis. But, unfortunately, this meaſure, ſpecious and expedient as it appeared at firſt, tended to deſtroy that conſtitution which it was deſigned to ſupport, and to counteract thoſe principles which had been implanted by Cranmer in the reformed ſyſtem of our religion. Their reluctance or refuſal to conform, in a variety of inſtances, to the eſtabliſhed ceremonies, and their refinements in theological diſcipline, filled the church with the moſt violent diviſions; and introduced end-

leſs

leſs intricate diſputations, not on fundamental doctrines of ſolid importance to the real intereſts of chriſtianity, but on poſitive points of idle and empty ſpeculation, which admitting no elegance of compoſition, and calling forth no vigour of abilities, exerciſed the learning of the clergy in the moſt barbarous and barren field of controverſial divinity, and obſtructed every purſuit of polite or manly erudition. Even the conforming clergy, from their want of penetration, and from their attachment to authorities, contributed to protract theſe frivolous and unbecoming controverſies: for if, in their vindication of the ſacerdotal veſtments, and of the croſs of baptiſm, inſtead of arguing from the jews, the primitive chriſtians, the fathers, councils, and cuſtoms, they had only appealed to common ſenſe and the nature of things, the propriety and expediency of thoſe formalities would have been much more eaſily and more clearly demonſtrated. To theſe inconveniencies we muſt add, that the common eccleſiaſtical preferments were ſo much diminiſhed by the ſeizure and alienation of impropriations, in the late depredations of the church, and which continued to be carried on with the ſame ſpirit of rapacity in the reign of Eliſabeth, that few perſons were regularly bred to the church, or, in other words, received a learned education. Hence, almoſt any that offered themſelves were, without diſtinction or examination, admitted to the ſacred function. Inſomuch, that in the year 1560, an injunction was directed to the biſhop of London from his metropolitan, requiring him to forbear ordaining any more artificers and other illiterate perſons who exerciſed ſecular occupations [l]. But as the evil was unavoidable, this caution took but little effect [k].

[l] Strype's GRINDAL. B. i. ch. iv. b. 40.

[k] Numerous illuminated artificers began early to preach and write in defence of the reformed religion. The firſt mechanic who left his lawful calling to vindicate the cauſe of the catholics, was one Miles Hoggard, a ſhoe-maker or hoſier, of London; who, in the reign of queen Mary, wrote a pamphlet entitled, *The Diſplaying of proteſtants, and ſundry their practices*, &c. Lond. 1556. 12mo. This piece ſoon acquired importance, by being anſwered by Lawrence Humphries,

About the year 1563, there were only two divines, and thoſe of higher rank, the preſident of Magdalen college [l], and the dean of Chriſt Church, who were capable of preaching the public ſermons before the univerſity of Oxford [m]. I will mention one inſtance of the extreme ignorance of our inferiour clergy about the middle of the ſixteenth century. In the year 1570, Horne, biſhop of Wincheſter, enjoined the minor canons of his cathedral to get by memory, every week, one chapter of ſaint Paul's epiſtles in Latin: and this formidable taſk, almoſt beneath the abilities of an ordinary ſchool-boy, was actually repeated by ſome of them, before the biſhop, dean, and prebendaries, at a public epiſcopal viſitation of that church [n]. It is well known that a ſet of homilies was publiſhed to ſupply their incapacity in compoſing ſermons: but it ſhould be remembered, that one reaſon for preſcribing this authoriſed ſyſtem of doctrine, was to prevent preachers from diſturbing the peace of the church by diſſeminating their own novel and indigeſted opinions.

The taſte for Latin compoſition in the reign of Eliſabeth, notwithſtanding it was faſhionable both to write and ſpeak in that language, was much worſe than in the reign of Henry the eighth, when juſter models were ſtudied, and when the novelty of claſſical literature excited a general emulation to imitate the Roman authors. The Latinity of Aſcham's proſe has little elegance. The verſification and phraſeology of

Humphries, and other eminent reformers. He printed other pieces of the ſame tendency. He was likewiſe an Engliſh poet; and I am glad of this opportunity of mentioning him in that character, as I could not have ventured to give him a place in the ſeries of our poetry. He wrote the MIRROUR of LOVE, Lond. 1555. 4to. Dedicated to queen Mary. Alſo the PATHWAY to THE TOWRE of PERFECTION. Lond. 1556. 4to. with ſome other pieces.

[l] Doctor Lawrence Humphreys, mentioned in the laſt note. Of whom it will not be improper to obſerve further in this place, that about the year 1553, he wrote an *Epiſtola de Græcis literis et Homeri lectione et imitatione ad præſidem et ſocios collegii Magdalenæ, Oxon.* In the CORNUCOPIA of Hadrian Junius, Baſil. 1558. fol.

[m] Wood, ut ſupr. i. 285.

[n] Regiſtr. Horne, Epiſc. Winton. fol. 80. b.

Buchanan's

Buchanan's Latin poetry are ſplendid and ſonorous, but not marked with the chaſte graces and ſimple ornaments of the Auguſtan age. One is ſurpriſed to find the learned archbiſhop Grindal, in the ſtatutes of a ſchool which he founded, and amply endowed, recommending ſuch barbarous and degenerate claſſics as Palingenius, Sedulius, aud Prudentius, to be taught in his new foundation [o]. Theſe, indeed, were the claſſics of a reforming biſhop: but the well-meaning prelate would have contributed much more to the ſucceſs of his intended reformation, by directing books of better taſte and leſs piety. That claſſical literature, and the public inſtitution of youth, were now in the loweſt ſtate, we may collect from a proviſion in archbiſhop Parker's foundation of three ſcholarſhips at Cambridge, in the year 1567. He orders that the ſcholars, who are appointed to be elected from three the moſt conſiderable ſchools in Kent and Norfolk, ſhall be "the *beſt* and *apteſt* ſchollers, well inſtructed in "the grammar, and, *if it may be*, ſuch as *can make a verſe* [p]." It became faſhionable in this reign to ſtudy Greek at court. The maids of honour indulged their ideas of ſentimental affection in the ſublime contemplations of Plato's Phaedo: and the queen, who underſtood Greek better than the canons of Windſor, and was certainly a much greater pedant than her ſucceſſor James the firſt, tranſlated Iſocrates [q]. But this paſſion for the Greek language ſoon ended where it began: nor do we find that it improved the national taſte, or influenced the writings, of the age of Eliſabeth.

All changes of rooted eſtabliſhments, eſpecially of a national religion, are attended with ſhocks and convulſions, unpropitious to the repoſe ſcience and ſtudy. But theſe unavoidable inconveniencies laſt not long. When the liberal genius of proteſtantiſm had perfected its work, and the firſt

[o] Strype's GRINDAL. B. ii. ch. xvii. p. 312. This was in in 1583.

[p] Blomefield's NORFOLK, ii. 224.

[q] Aſcham's SCHOLEMASTER, p. 19. b. edit. 1589. And EPISTOL. lib. i. p. 19. ut ſupr.

fanaticiſms

fanaticiſms of well-meaning but miſguided zealots had ſubſided, every ſpecies of uſeful and elegant knowledge recovered its ſtrength, and aroſe with new vigour. Acquiſitions, whether in theology or humanity, were no longer excluſively confined to the clergy: the laity eagerly embraced thoſe purſuits from which they had long been unjuſtly reſtrained: and, ſoon after the reign of Eliſabeth, men attained that ſtate of general improvement, and thoſe ſituations with reſpect to literature and life, in which they have ever ſince perſevered.

But it remains to bring home, and to apply, this change in the ſentiments of mankind, to our main ſubject. The cuſtoms, inſtitutions, traditions, and religion, of the middle ages, were favorable to poetry. Their pageaunts, proceſſions, ſpectacles, and ceremonies, were friendly to imagery, to perſonification and allegory. Ignorance and ſuperſtition, ſo oppoſite to the real intereſts of human ſociety, are the parents of imagination. The very devotion of the Gothic times was romantic. The catholic worſhip, beſides that its numerous exteriour appendages were of a pictureſque and even of a poetical nature, diſpoſed the mind to a ſtate of deception, and encouraged, or rather authoriſed, every ſpecies of credulity: its viſions, miracles, and legends, propagated a general propenſity to the Marvellous, and ſtrengthened the belief of ſpectres, demons, witches, and incantations. Theſe illuſions were heightened by churches of a wonderful mechaniſm, and conſtructed on ſuch principles of inexplicable architecture as had a tendency to impreſs the ſoul with every falſe ſenſation of religious fear. The ſavage pomp and the capricious heroiſm of the baronial manners, were replete with incident, adventure, and enterpriſe: and the intractable genius of the feudal policy, held forth thoſe irregularities of conduct, diſcordancies of intereſt, and diſſimilarities of ſituation, that framed rich materials for the minſtrel-muſe. The tacit compact of faſhion, which promotes civility by diffuſing

diffuſing habits of uniformity, and therefore deſtroys peculiarities of character and ſituation, had not yet operated upon life: nor had domeſtic convenience aboliſhed unwieldy magnificence. Literature, and a better ſenſe of things, not only baniſhed theſe barbarities, but ſuperſeded the mode of compoſition which was formed upon them. Romantic poetry gave way to the force of reaſon and inquiry; as its own inchanted palaces and gardens inſtantaneouſly vaniſhed, when the chriſtian champion diſplayed the ſhield of truth, and baffled the charm of the necromancer. The ſtudy of the claſſics, together with a colder magic and a tamer mythology, introduced method into compoſition: and the univerſal ambition of rivalling thoſe new patterns of excellence, the faultleſs models of Greece and Rome, produced that bane of invention, IMITATION. Erudition was made to act upon genius. Fancy was weakened by reflection and philoſophy. The faſhion of treating every thing ſcientifically, applied ſpeculation and theory to the arts of writing. Judgment was advanced above imagination, and rules of criticiſm were eſtabliſhed. The brave eccentricities of original genius, and the daring hardineſs of native thought, were intimidated by metaphyſical ſentiments of perfection and refinement. Setting aſide the conſideration of the more ſolid advantages, which are obvious, and are not the diſtinct object of our contemplation at preſent, the lover of true poetry will aſk, what have we gained by this revolution? It may be anſwered, much good ſenſe, good taſte, and good criticiſm. But, in the mean time, we have loſt a ſet of manners, and a ſyſtem of machinery, more ſuitable to the purpoſes of poetry, than thoſe which have been adopted in their place. We have parted with extravagancies that are above propriety, with incredibilities that are more acceptable than truth, and with fictions that are more valuable than reality.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.