



eCOMMONS

Loyola University Chicago
Loyola eCommons

Master's Theses

Theses and Dissertations

1928

English Scholars of the Renaissance

Laura Backes
Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation

Backes, Laura, "English Scholars of the Renaissance" (1928). *Master's Theses*. Paper 34.
http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/34

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).
Copyright © 1928 Laura Backes

ENGLISH SCHOLARS OF THE RENAISSANCE

A Thesis submitted
in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
in
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

1 9 2 8

Laura Backes,

R.S.C.J., A.B.

V I T A

Born in Osmond, Nebraska, October 13, 1902. Educated in the public and in the parochial schools of Humphrey, Nebraska. Bachelor of Arts, Barat College, Lake Forest, Illinois, 1923. Normal course, Kenwood Normal Training School, Albany, New York. Taught in the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Lake Forest, Illinois. Member of the Society of the Sacred Heart; member of the Classical Association.

CONTENTS

Introduction - Relation of History to
Literature

Chapter I
The Tudor Dynasty in its relation
to the Renaissance

The Universities of England during
the Tudor Period

Chapter II
Thomas Linacre

Chapter III
John Colet

Chapter IV
William Grocyn

Chapter V
Desiderius Erasmus

Chapter VI
Blessed Thomas More

Chapter VII
Sir Thomas More's Literary Work.

Introduction

In every country, in every age, literature and history are twin sisters, --- or would it be more correct to say that literature is the daughter, born of the history of the time? Be that as it may, the bond between the two is close and intimate, whether we look to France or Spain, to Germany or Italy. Literature, indeed, is an outgrowth of life. All through the ages it has served to commemorate the heroic deeds of men and preserve to their peoples the ideals that inspired them. However mythical a tale may be, it has its foundation in reality. The old story of Jason and the Golden Fleece symbolizes the beginnings of Greek commerce with the Oriental nations; the Golden Fleece itself being the treasure brought from eastern shores. The greatest of the Homeric poems, the Iliad, is the fascinating tale of the siege of Troy, long supposed to be mere fiction but proved by modern research to be founded on fact. Before modern sceptics came to doubt the Homeric stories, they had been accepted by the whole of Greece as the memento of the glorious Heroic Age.

Leaving ancient Greece for more modern France, we find that the earliest form which French literature assumed was that of "Chansons de Gestes," -- Songs of Deeds. The earliest and the most beautiful of these is the "Chanson de Roland" which tells of the death of the beloved hero at Roncesvalles, and the swift vengeance of Charlemagne on the infamous Ganelon and his pagan comrades. Roland is strong and tender in death as in life, and displays the courage and the faith of a ninth century Frenchman in the face of death.

On his memory rose full many a thought
Of the lands he won and the fields he fought,
Of his gentle France, of his kin and line,
And his nursing father, King Karl benign.
He may not the tear and sob control,
Nor yet forgets he his parting soul;
To God's compassion he makes his cry:
"O Father true, who canst not lie,
Who didst Lazarus raise unto life again,
And Daniel shield in the lion's den,
Shield my soul from its peril due
For the sins I sinned my life-time through."
He did his right-hand glove uplift,
Saint Gabriel took from his hand the gift.
Then drooped his head upon his breast
And with clasped hands he went to rest.

Not less stirring are the glorious deeds of

Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, immortalized in eloquent Spanish in the poem of El Cid which, besides describing his exploits in the field, chronicles the domestic affairs of the hero and incidents of the court and the home.

Portuguese literature, though beginning its independent existence later than the literature of neighboring countries, became in the fifteenth century worthy to be called national. In due time, came Luis de Camoëns to celebrate the great enterprises of the past, nobly lowering his ungrateful native land with "Os Lusíades" which deserves, as a national epic, a place alongside the Iliad. In it de Camoëns celebrates the achievements of his countrymen, the triumphs and the greatness, as well as the weaknesses of his race.

Italy's last great epic, the "Gerusalemme Liberata", born of Tasso's gifted pen, drew its inspiration from the First Crusade wherein selfishness and greed stand out in severe contrast to the nobility of the valiant leader who would not wear a crown of gold in the very city where his Lord and Master had worn a crown of thorns.

If Greece, France, Spain, and many other lands furnish splendid proofs of the indissoluble bond existing between literature and history, nowhere is the relationship more clearly discernible than in the long story of English literature.

Thus, in the songs of scop and gleeman in Hrothgar's famous hall, the theme is of war and the sea and ever-present death, for these were the things most important to the Anglo-Saxon mind -- the most engrossing subject of conversation and of song. The Fortunes of Men from the Exeter Book gives a vivid picture of Anglo-Saxon life in certain of its phases. This tale interested the Anglo-Saxon because it told the story of his fathers; -- it interests us because it is a real story of real men. These lines quoted by Morley (English Writers, Vol. II, p. 33) are a song of death which show us the enemies against which they fought for very life to be the same as those of our day:

One shall sharp hunger slay;
One shall the storms beat down;
One shall be destroyed by darts;
One die in war.
One shall live losing
The light of his eyes,
Feel blindly with fingers;
And one lame of foot

With sinew-wound wearily wasteth away
Musing and mourning
With death in his mind.

Turning from this to the first example England gives us of the epic, the noblest type of poetry, we find in the stirring metre of Beowulf what history relates in cold, terse prose. Though founded partly on lyth, it has a strong historical background, an understanding of which is necessary if we would follow the appeal of the poem. We cannot appreciate the gentleness of the great leader unless we know the history of the rough, warlike race which produced him. His story shows the ideals of the old Anglo-Saxons, the things they treasured, their way of living and of dying. In the tale of his brave deeds we see their love of liberty and law, and the eagerness with which they rose to battle with the giants who threatened these. The keynote of the poem is an active devotedness to duty which was put into words by Beowulf's thane, --

Far better stainless death
Than life's dishonored breath.

In every land the men who kept alive the great deeds of their national heroes were looked upon as benefactors of their country and were highly esteemed by every class of people. Troubadour and gleeman found a warm welcome and a shelter from the cold of winter at the fireside of both nobleman and peasant. The poet of ancient Greece, the trouvère and troubadour of France, the scop and gleeman of old England, who kept before men the ideals and aspirations upon which our civilization is founded, have long since disappeared. Their counterparts, however, are to be found in the unselfish few whose great desire is to conserve to the race the ideals which uphold it.

In the period of the earlier Renaissance in England these few were found in the noble scholars who, inspired by John Colet, guided by Sir Thomas More, soared above Time, and, resting in the thought of Eternity, preserved for their people the expression of noble thought and deed which we call literature.

THE TUDOR DYNASTY 1485-1603

The late Mediaeval period saw England a prey to war. The satisfaction of physical needs and the necessity of providing for protection against treachery and the evils of party strife absorbed all the time and energy of the higher classes in England, while misgovernment under the later Plantagenets and the Hundred Years' War sapped the vitality of the people and left them at the end of the Wars of the Roses content to turn from bloodshedding to cultivate once more the arts of peace.

During the century which preceded the accession of the first of the Tudor Kings the invention and improvement of implements of war and of navigation had created a class of professional warriors and seamen so that the Wars of the Roses was carried on by a more or less regular army as opposed to the motley collection of forces used in former wars. Commerce too had been steadily growing. Under Henry V. England enjoyed a greater degree of prosperity than at almost any former period. Even the Wars of the Roses did not immediately cause a decline in commerce nor in prosperity, as we know from the fact that the peasantry as well as the growing middle class were well clothed and well fed. A labourer's weekly wages sufficed to supply him with a bushel of wheat and twenty-four pounds of meat (14: III., 453-455). Sir John Fortescue, Lord Chief Justice under Henry VI., in his excellent treatise on the English Laws (11) says "that every inhabitant (of England) is at liberty fully to use and enjoy whatever his farm produceth -- the fruits of the earth, the increase of his flock and the like; all the improvements he makes are his own to use and enjoy, without the let or denial of any. Hence the inhabitants are rich in gold and silver, and in all the necessaries and conveniences of life. --- Each man according to his rank, hath all things which conduce to make life easy and happy." Pauperism as an institution did not exist. If a man found himself temporarily in distress, he turned with confidence to the boundless hospitality of the monasteries.

This temporary prosperity among the lower classes was interfered with by the constant wars stirred up by various factions at home and abroad, and the citizens of London must have breathed a tremendous sigh of relief as they gathered less than a week after the battle of Bosworth Field to witness the triumphant entry of their new sovereign lord, the Tudor Earl of Richmond. Continuous warfare had lowered ideals of conduct and cheapened human life until now the nation was tired of war; she longed for peace and would say "Long live the king" to any sovereign who could promise her tranquility. Thus ended

the Wars of the Roses which had raged with such fury that the noble blood of the realm was well-nigh exhausted. "Brother had armed against brother, father against son; it seemed as though all the innocent blood poured forth like water during a century of unjust wars was now being visited on the land (6: 288)."

The marriage of Henry VII. to Elizabeth of York soon after united the Red and the White Roses forever in peace. When the smoke of battle had disappeared, it was soon found that there had vanished also feudalism and the manorial life which had given the Middle Ages their characteristic of stability. Only a handful of the nobility remained and these kept but a shadow of their former greatness and power. The king rose triumphant, no longer in awe of his nobles, and laid the foundation of that absolutism which characterized the Tudor Dynasty.

In spite of his prudent marriage, however, Henry VII. was not left in peaceful possession of his throne until he had in cold blood rid himself of the last thorn in his side, the young Earl of Warwick. His position now secure he set himself to establish his power. In that subtle state policy characteristic of his age Henry VII. was a master. What he had won by the sword he preserved by a crafty and sagacious system of government whose object -- to depress the power of the nobility and render the crown absolute -- was chiefly advanced by the arbitrary proceedings of the Star Chamber (6:317).

Lord Bacon assures us that Henry VII. executed only three noblemen in his reign, but he does not add that Henry preferred taking their purses to taking their heads. Though the first Tudor King was economical in his personal expenses, was generous in his gifts to charity and liberal in his encouragement of trade and commerce, his love for money and his means of obtaining it rendered him unpopular with all classes of his subjects. Besides, his suspicious mind and his lack of warmth still further alienated the affection of his people and it was for this reason among others that the accession of his son was hailed with enthusiastic delight.

The reign of Henry VIII. brought at least one blessing to the country -- that of profound peace, but it was a deceptive peace which had led to practical slavery. When Henry VIII. ascended the throne, with every favoring condition of youth and disposition, a spirit of freedom still existed in Merry England, but with the passing of a very few years that spirit had disappeared. Certainly it was a blinded and enslaved population that at the beck of the sovereign would turn from the rightful queen whom they loved, acknowledge as queen one whom

Henry VIII., keen, cruel, passionate, self-willed, ambitious, allowed nothing to stand in the way of the gratification of every desire. Men and women were swept aside when they barred his way and when he came face to face with the uplifted, warning hand of the Pope he was so far advanced on the road of self-indulgence that the Church, too, was set aside to clear his path. Under the guidance of the infamous Cromwell and his worthy colleague, Cranmer, Henry's royal progress swept on, at each moment drawing farther and farther from the Holy See until the decisive hour when with a mere gesture the whole papal power in England was swept away.

The dissolution of the monasteries soon filled the too quickly emptied coffers of the prodigal king and left as one of its far-reaching effects, pauperism in its most appalling form. Soon the statute book of England recorded legal enactments the like of which had been till then unknown -- laws against vagabonds who were to be branded on the cheek, or more merciful licenses to beg. The Act of Supremacy which preceded the Great Pillage by two years combined with it in making Henry VIII's reign the most calamitous in modern history, for though he died still professing the Catholic Faith while denying its government, he himself had taken the first step toward the establishment of Protestantism.

With Edward VI's accession to the throne, Protestantism secured a strong foothold. He had been tutored by his stepmother, Katherine Parr, a sincere disciple of the Reformers, and had as his advisors, his uncle, the Duke of Somerset, and Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The two latter had been enriched by church lands and the wealth of England's monasteries, and naturally they were inclined to favour a religion which countenanced their proceedings. The second step in the establishment of Protestantism was accomplished by acts of Parliament which did away with many rites and ceremonies of age-old Faith and by the "Forty-two Articles," a new statement of the doctrines of the church.

During Edward's reign, consequent on the extension of enclosures which had begun in the previous reign, poverty was universal in England. The poor had not the monasteries to turn to and in many parts common discontent led to insurrections which were put down by brutal measures. Poverty, however, was more easily dealt with than the quiet stubborn resistance opposed by a believing peasantry to the new English liturgy which stripped and desecrated their churches, robbed them of the Blessed Sacrament, and left them only a meaningless service which sounded to them, as they said, "like a Christmas play."

The episode of Lady Jane Gray proved that the nation was not ready to fight to enthrone a Protestant monarch

and Mary Tudor, an earnest representative of the old beloved Faith was greeted with enthusiasm when she entered London. She made no secret of her intention of restoring the Faith, but her opening declaration was moderate and conciliating. Up to a certain point she met with little difficulty for when once the Act of Uniformity ceased to be enforced, both priests and people returned joyfully to the worship of their fathers. If the restoration had proceeded as calmly and gently as it had begun it might have been permanent, but the dangerous spirit which was abroad among the people alarmed Mary's advisors and under their counsels the bloody persecution, -- the only blot on an otherwise admirable reign, -- began to take its toll of victims. It is doubtful if Mary had a large share of responsibility for these measures (6: 383). Religious tolerance was unknown in her day and she practiced only what was preached by every sect of the day. Of all the Tudor family she alone was neither blood-thirsty nor a tyrant though she lived in an age in which she was forced to witness the merciless slaughter of many whom she loved and revered.

Her great ambition was to restore the Faith permanently and during the last months of her life a haunting fear possessed her, the fear that all she had done would be in vain and that the reformers would triumph. Her sister, Elizabeth, was next in succession and Mary required from her a promise of adherence to the Catholic Faith. Within a week's time Elizabeth was "Converted" and swore under oath that she would preserve the Faith in England.

Mary died on the 17th of November, 1558, and Elizabeth was crowned according to the Catholic rite, - because none of the Bishops would consent to perform the ceremony in a schismatical manner. It was a solemn mockery, for a return to Protestantism was almost a foregone conclusion. To preserve the Catholic Faith would mean Elizabeth to acknowledge her own base origin and forfeit the crown of England in favour of its rightful wearer, Mary, Queen of Scots. To do so would have required the humility and self-sacrifice of a saint, and Elizabeth was no saint. As all her interests were bound up in the new doctrine, her first action, the third and final step in the establishment of Protestantism, was to reassume the Royal Supremacy, reappropriate Church property, abolish the Mass, restore the English Prayer Book, and, since she could expect no compliance from the Bishops, to create a hierarchy of her own for whom she had an undisguised contempt (6: 415). Thus began one of the bloodiest reigns of Christendom, a reign equal in magnificence and cruelty to an Eastern despotism. In spite of this, however, Elizabeth was a mighty and triumphant ruler and succeeded in the space of her own reign in raising England from a second-rate position to a level with the first nations in Europe.

The power of the "fair vestal throned by the west" was upheld by that class on whose friendship the fortune of princes greatly depends. Elizabeth's reign might have been recorded in very different phrases if "the reasoning powers of Bacon, the eloquence of Sidney, the poetic talents of Spencer, the wit of Harrington, and the genius of Shakespeare had been arrayed against her, instead of combining to represent her as the personification of all earthly perfection -- scarcely indeed, short of divinity (27: III., 6)."

The Universities of England-Tudor Period

In the Middle Ages the word University had not the meaning Cardinal Newman gives it in his notable work on the subject. He considers the University the school where all the branches of science are studied; in the Middle Ages it was thought of as a union of masters and students, a school which all classes attended. (36:XV,190)

In origin the Universities differ slightly. Some were chartered by the Pope, the King or the Emperor; others were formed by the students and masters themselves. Previous to the Reformation thirty-three Universities held a Papal charter, fifteen were founded by the imperial authority. The famous University of Wittenberg was founded by Maximilian I, Charles IV, many years previous, had granted charters to Siena, Arezzo and Orange. (36:VX,191) All the great churches had libraries which sometimes developed gradually into Universities. The greater number, however, owe their existence to the monastic and cathedral schools, for from the earliest centuries it has been the practice of the Church to erect a school by the side of the cathedral or in the cloister of the monastery. The three famous Paris schools; St. Victor's, attached to the Church of the Canon's Regular, Sainte Geneviève du Mont, and Notre Dame all grew from monastic schools to form the University of Paris. (36:XV,189)

The Universities of England are not exceptions to this rule. Oxford still bears in the rudimentary elements of its constitutions the unmistakable traces of its origin in the cathedral and monastic schools. Its vitality has outlasted the Reformation itself and its statutes remain to this moment as obstinately Catholic as in the days of Bacon and Duns Scotus.

In the sixteenth century when Reason broke away from Faith and carried desolation in its headlong course through the field of the human intellect, the Universities of Germany and France loosened the ties which bound them to their mother, the Church. Oxford, on the contrary, continued without opposition to receive its governing head from the Bishop of Lincoln. To this prelate was given the privilege and important duty of appointing the Chancellor of the University. The Chancellor thus became the connecting link between the University and the Church.

Unfortunately the Chancellorship could be an instrument for evil as well as for good, The Chancellor,

as has been said, owed his position to the Bishop of Lincoln and when the Bishop became a tool of the Crown (as happened when the Reformation had done its work) the University was easily won over to King Henry VIII's opinions.

The disputes between town and gown, as well as the interest which the English sovereigns manifested towards the Universities show that these seats of learning had acquired a position of no small importance in England. It will be easily understood, then, that they could not keep entirely aloof from the great political contests of the times. Even as far back as the reign of King John the political parties had their representatives at the academic schools where many a miniature battle was fought, not always with a clear discernment as to the political principles which they pretended to uphold. When the question of Henry VIII's divorce arose, though there was much dusting of folios and a great manifestation of interest in theological manuscripts, it was neither folio nor manuscript but the subservience of a powerful minority that led Oxford to pronounce in the King's favour.

During the reign of Henry VII Academic learning seems to have been at a standstill. There is little evidence of movement whether of progression or of retrogression. An historical writer speaking of the English Universities previous to Henry VIII's accession says, "The schools were much frequented with quirks and sophistry. All things whether taught or written seemed to be trite and inane. No pleasant streams of humanity or mythology were gliding among us; and the Greek language from whence the greater part of knowledge is derived, was at a very low ebb or in a manner forgotten." (14:V,265)

But this was to be remedied. In 1511, mainly through the influence of John Fisher, Chancellor of the University, Erasmus of Rotterdam was secured to profess Greek at Cambridge. Interest in Greek was also stimulated by Bishop Foxe of Winchester's foundation of Corpus Christi College in 1516. (29:252) The learned Greek scholar, Claymond, was appointed its first president. Corpus Christi College has ever since enjoyed a high reputation for learning. At the time, however, Oxford was convulsed by the introduction of Grecian studies. The "Trojans", as they named themselves, showed implacable hostility to the "new learning". The tumult was only quelled by a peacemaking letter from Sir Thomas More reminding the indignant Latinists that the King had ordered the study of Greek to be encouraged, and pointing out the many advantages to be derived from it.

It is about this time that we begin to notice the eminent Cardinal Wolsey's interest in intellectual pursuits. But neither his school at Ipswich nor his foundation of Christ Church at Oxford in 1525 could increase his popularity. He was a power at Oxford as elsewhere, but no one was deceived into the belief that love of letters inspired his foundation of "Cardinal's College". (29:254) He knew the influence of literary men and wanted to be the director of that influence just as Hohn of Gaunt, in persuading the students of Oxford, relied on their influence to convince the nation of the blessedness of his own schemes.

In spite of politics, however, there was a remarkable freshness in the world of letters about the time Erasmus visited England. Both Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon encouraged it and surrounded themselves with the most learned men of the time. Thomas Linacre was the King's Physician, Colet his preacher, Thomas More his Privy Councillor.

Erasmus might have been a little prejudiced in favour of England because of the kindness of his English friends but in spite of friendly prejudice he could not help saying and writing just what he thought. Here are a few lines from a letter written to an English friend in Italy which give his opinion of the state of learning in England at the time of his first sojourn there. It is dated December 5, 1497, before the great revival began, therefore, we can conclude from Erasmus' words that the Latin and Greek of English scholars could not have been quite so barbarous as Hallam would have them.

"How do you like our England, you will say? Believe me, my Robert, when I answer that I never liked anything so much before. I find the climate both pleasant and wholesome; and I have met with so much kindness and so much learning, not hackneyed and trivial, but deep, accurate, ancient Latin and Greek, that but for the pleasure of seeing it, I do not so much now care for Italy. When I hear my Colet I seem to be listening to Plato himself. In Grocyn, who does not marvel at such a perfect round of learning? What can be more acute, profound and delicate than the judgment of Linacre? What has nature ever created more gentle, more sweet, more happy than the genius of Thomas More. I need not go through the list. It is marvelous how abundant is the harvest of ancient learning in this country to which you ought all the sooner to return." (24:226)

It has been assumed by some writers in discussions of this period of the development of English letters

that the "freedom of thought" due to England's apostasy from Rome gave rise to the revival of letters. If by the term "New Learning" is meant the heresies of Luther and the other so-called reformers this statement is doubtless true. But if we take the term "New Learning" in the sense in which it was understood by Sir Thomas More, Erasmus, Colet, Bishop Fisher and others, the evidence proves the assertion without foundation. Men like Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher who were enthusiastic advocates of the revival of classical learning gave their lives in uncompromising opposition to the "New Learning" in the sense of Lutheranism.

As a matter of fact, the decay of scholarship, the depopulation of the Universities, the destruction of priceless libraries, were the direct result of the break with Rome and the introduction of the reformed religion in England. (29:252) Learning flourished in the English Universities up to the time of the advent of foreign protestants who crossed the channel on the invitation of Thomas Cromwell and Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. After 1535, when the larger monasteries were being dissolved and ransacked there was a marked decline. These monasteries had trained the young boys previous to their entrance into the Universities and had fitted them to begin the more advanced work in the colleges. They had furnished the Universities with students and when they no longer existed the attendance at the Universities, of course, decreased rapidly. Ascham who had boasted of the classical studies at Oxford we find in 1550 lamenting the decay of the grammar schools and predicting in consequence the speedy extinction of the Universities. (5:702) The nature of the subjects discussed also changed. The foreigners imported by Cromwell disputed on the varying degrees of the Real Presence --or rather absence-- in the Blessed Sacrament.

The classical learning, which, as we have seen, was not too well received soon declined. In 1545 scholars were apprehensive of the total extinction of studies at Cambridge, so low had scholarship fallen (35:1,565, et seq. "It would pity a man's heart," said Latimer, preaching before the King in 1548, "to hear what I hear of the state of Cambridge; what it is at Oxford, I cannot tell." (29:252) Oxford, indeed, conferred not a single degree in 1547 and 1548. (29:292) There was a period in the autumn of 1545 when Cambridge was in danger of being entirely dissolved. Henry had called on Parliament for pecuniary assistance but as the subsidy which was granted did not prove sufficient for the needs of the greedy sovereign, the revenues of all the hospitals and colleges of England were placed at his

disposal.(27:III; 311) The University of Cambridge fearing the impending spoliation implored the protection of the learned queen, Katherine Parr. The queen not forgetting the affection manifested for her by this learned body of her subjects influenced her royal husband to prevent the disaster. Among the manuscripts of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, is to be found the letter which the queen wrote to the University to advise them of the success of her intercession. In it she makes some comments on the nature of their studies in words which show us how ~~wane~~ were her views.

After thanking the members of the University for their letter expressing appreciation for her own talents she goes on to say: "And forasmuch (as I do hear) all kind of learning doth flourish among you in this age as it did amongst the Greeks at Athens long ago, I desire you all not so to hunger for the exquisite knowledge of profane learning, that it may be thought that the Greek University was but transposed, or now in England revived, forgetting our Christianity; since their excellency did only attain to moral and natural things. But rather I gently exhort you to study and apply these doctrines, as means and apt degrees, to the attaining and setting forth Christ's doctrines, that it may not be laid against you in evidence, at the tribunal of God, how you were ashamed of Christ's doctrine. ---- I trust you will -- conform your sundry gifts, arts and studies in such sort that Cambridge may be accounted rather a University of divine philosophy than of natural and moral, as Athens was." Katherine concluded her letter by saying that, because of Henry's interest and patronage of letters she has succeeded in saving for Cambridge its necessary revenues. It was rather Katherine's personal influence than Henry's interest in learning that saved the University. It was the day when the only law of property read:

"He may take who has the power
And he may keep who can,"

and it is doubtful if Henry would have let his avarice be thwarted by love of learning.

This safety was, however, only temporary, for in the reign of Edward VI every one of the hospitals, guilds and colleges which had escaped the greed of Henry was confiscated to the crown.(6:361) The old Masters and tutors of the University found themselves replaced by Calvinist teachers from Germany and Geneva, many of whom received livings or were employed "to purge the leaven of Popery out of the Universities."(6:366) Peter Martyr received a professor-

ship at Oxford to teach the new theology. John Knox, the Scottish reformer, was named chaplain to the King whose young mind was moulded at will by the avaricious, self-seeking courtiers and councillors who surrounded him. At Oxford, canon law, theology and scholastic logic were abolished and during Edward VI's reign the school of divinity was closed. In spite of the efforts of those who were really interested in education and feared its downfall, all the schools save two were closed or let to shopkeepers. (5:702) Latimer, preaching before the King for the last time (1550) deplored the "unparalleled immorality, oppression of the poor, and perversion of justice" that prevailed wherever the doctrine of faith without work~~s~~ was preached (29:352) If morals were at a low ebb, learning also had suffered. Roger Ascham, writing to Cranmer in the previous year (1549) said his University was so drooping that very few had hopes of coming thither at all, and fewer had any comfort to remain when once they had come, and that abroad it retained not so much as the shadow of its ancient dignity.

At Oxford, the Earl of Warwick, and at Cambridge the Duke of Somerset were the iconoclasts of studies. Cartloads of manuscripts and priceless books were burned or sold to bakers to furnish fuel for their ovens. (29:353) Of the impetus given to learning by the first advent of the Renaissance scarcely a trace remained; ~~the~~ intellectual movement of the age which had begun with so much promise was crushed by the oppressive new religion. Even the buildings were marked for destruction. Somerset would not stop at this demolition once he had with impunity destroyed the houses of three bishops to obtain materials for the monument to his consummate vanity. All this destruction was pursued in Edward's name, but the boy-king cannot have been in any way responsible. He is credited with founding grammar schools, but the only foundation really made was that of Christ's Hospital which was founded not as a grammar school but as a foundling hospital. (19:4) As a matter of fact, the grammar schools that were then in existence were swept away, plundered, damaged or deprived of their revenues which was tantamount to a death warrant. (19:4)

Throughout the Tudor period the state of the Universities was one of fluctuation. During the reign of Mary, First Queen Regnant of England, the almost expiring schools began to breathe more steadily and though her reign extended over a very short period of years we find that much attention was paid to the interest of Oxford and Cambridge. Mary herself built the public schools at Oxford and is still remembered in the University in its list of benefactors although the buildings were later torn down and rebuilt by another. Mary's interest in the schools and colleges of her kingdom encouraged that of her subjects. In 1554 Sir Thomas Pope founded Trinity

College at Oxford with the express regulation that its students should acquire a relish for the graces and purity of the Latin tongue. At a time when the rage for polemic disputation was at its height such a regulation no doubt did much to preserve the study of classic literature which had been almost obliterated from the curriculum. Sir Thomas was much interested in the college he had founded and conversed about it frequently with the Lady Elizabeth who at the time was in his keeping. He speaks with satisfaction in one of his letters of the interest she manifested in his college. (27:III,92) "The Princess Elizabeth", he says, "often asketh me about the course I have devised for my scholars and that part of my statutes respecting study I have shown her she likes well." Queen Mary's interest was of a practical nature. Bound by her conscience the peace of which she valued "more than ten crowns" (18:V,492) she restored to the Church and even to the Universities the property and revenues taken by the Crown. (6:387)

Other private individuals devoted their fortunes to the advancement of classical learning after the example of their generous and devoted queen. In 1555 St. John's was founded on the site of St. Bernard's house of studies for Cistercians by Sir John White. Dr. Caius endowed Gonvil Hall, Cambridge so highly that it now bears his name as well as that of the original founder. This revival of interest in the practical needs of the Universities increased so that during the reign of Mary's successor three more colleges were founded at Oxford.

*As a corporate body the University of Oxford dates only from the reign of Elizabeth when under the influence of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, an Act of Parliament was passed in 1571 incorporating the 'chancellors, masters and scholars' of Oxford. Subscription to the Act of Supremacy and the Thirty-nine Articles was required from every student above sixteen years of age and for three centuries the University, formerly open to all Christendom was narrowed to an exclusively Anglican institution and remained so in spite of subsequent legislation abolishing religious tests. (36:XI,366)

Thomas Linacre

The history of the early Renaissance period in England is replete with the names of great and famous men but its literature is stangely silent. When we remember the turmoil of the age, the clang of arms that almost daily filled the ears of men, we do not wonder at the absence of literary development. War is often the poet's subject, but he does not glorify it on the very battlefield with steel flashing about him. Literature needs the gracious aid of peace and quiet contentment in which to grow, to bud and to flower.

This is the age of the Renaissance, yes, but it is the age when the Renaissance was lived. Its life was written in the peaceful years that followed when men could look back and glory in the loyalty and courage of the leaders who rescued Faith and Letters from oblivion in England.

This is the "age productive in personalities, many-sided, centralized, complete. Here, artists and philosophers and those whom the action of the world has elevated and made keen, do not live in isolation, but breathe a common air, and catch light and heat from eachother's thought (25: XIV.)." This age was less brilliant in England than on the continent but not less glorious in its fruits. The little group of great men who laboured throughout a lifetime to preserve the tree whose fruit they saved for posterity but which they themselves could not remain to enjoy, these are the men who lived the Renaissance. They are remembered not for their writings -- for none is a genius -- but for their lives and for their real contribution to civilization.

Thomas Linacre, the first of the group whom we call the leaders of the Renaissance in England, was born at Canterbury in 1460. Of his parents we know little except that they were poor and obscure. Certainly, they must have been virtuous and industrious if we may judge them by their offspring. Thomas received his early education at Christ Church, Canterbury, but early in life, like Sir Thomas More, he attracted the attention of a great churchman, Bishop Selling. This "first man of the New Learning in England" took a practical personal interest in the attractive, lively boy and on his urging the matter Thomas began to study at All Souls', Oxford in 1480. He was elected Fellow in 1484 and here acquired his love for Greek literature from the lectures of a Greek professor who was at Oxford at this time. He soon had an opportunity to satisfy his desire for Greek learning for his uncle, Bishop Selling, was planning a journey to Rome and invited young Linacre to accompany him. The invitation was at once

accepted and we soon find the young scholar in Florence where his modest manners and inherent loveliness won for him the affection of Lorenzo the Magnificent who chose him as companion and fellow-student for the Medici children. Thus he daily studied and chatted with the patron of the later Renaissance, the future Leo X., and had for his masters in Latin and Greek Politian and Chalcondylas. He profited greatly by his studies and the proficiency he here acquired in the Greek and Latin tongues gives him his place as one of the foremost humanists in England and the best Greek scholar of his period.

In this extremely hospitable palace he was brought into daily contact with culture and brilliancy, vice and virtue. Lorenzo kept open house and any who had wit or talent found place at his table. He gave equal encouragement to the best and to the worst tendencies of his time. It seems strange that Bishop Selling should leave his young protege exposed to the corrupting influence of Lorenzo's court. Linacre, however, does not seem to have suffered too much from the contact. Perhaps Bishop Selling knew that the youthful scholar would choose to retain and be influenced only by the good which he saw and heard. The probability is that the good Bishop had not the power to resist Il Magnifico who had set his heart on having the young Englishman as a member of his household.

All things have an end, however, and after some time spent in Florence, Linacre went to Vicenza where he studied medicine under Nicholas Leonicensus. He received his M.D. at Padua, visited Rome and Venice, and, on his return journey to England, stayed for a time in Geneva and Paris. He was eagerly welcomed by those whose interest was wrapped up in the new humanistic movement and in 1497 when Colet returned from his tour of Europe he found Linacre at Oxford delivering public lectures on Greek Literature.

It was at this time that the celebrated war between "Greeks and Trojans" was being waged. The Greeks called their Latin adversaries "sleepy surly fellows who talked bad Latin and never said a smart or clever thing (5:674)." Not such an injurious denunciation, but it piqued the Trojans who retaliated with the well-known proverb, "Let the Greeks beware of heresy (5:675)." Linacre was not a man of extremes so the proverb could never point to him. Peace between the warring parties was at last restored by Sir Thomas More's epistle and for some time after this event Linacre continued his lectures.

His interest in humanism did not let him forget the immediate necessities of the human beings about him and he made good use of the medical information he had obtained at Vicenza and Padua. After a number of years of distinguished practice he was appointed royal physician to Henry VIII. He

was also the regular medical attendant of Cardinal Wolsey, Archbishop Warham, Bishop Fox of Winchester and many of the leading nobility.

He was now a man of no small importance; he was daily in contact with the nobility who lived at court, he had founded two lectureships at Oxford and Cambridge and he had translated Galen so well that Erasmus could say that Linacre's Latin was better than Galen's Greek. He was besides a member of that select group of distinguished men whose central figure was Sir Thomas More. He was high on the road to honor and fame when he came to realize that honour is "but an empty bubble." He began to feel the hollowness of a life spent in the luxurious court of his sovereign and he looked for something higher; his lofty ideals called for better things. He took seriously the words of his Master; he sold all and devoted his fortune to the establishment of the Royal College of Physicians.

At this time the practice of Medicine had fallen into disrepute because of the increasing number of irregular practitioners. The Royal College regulated the practice of Medicine and after Linacre had obtained a charter none but regular physicians could practice in London or its environs. This college is the oldest of its kind in the world (36: IX., 265) and still keeps the excellent and far-sighted constitution which Linacre left it as his legacy and which is the fruit of that judgment which Erasmus found so "acute, profound and delicate."

In 1520 the founder resigned his position at court and having sold all and given to the poor he carried his plan to completion. He was ordained priest and after four years' enjoyment of the hundredfold he finished his course in 1524, leaving behind him many friends and, as Johnson says, "no enemies."

Colet

"Oh, Erasmus, of books and learning there is no end, but there is nothing better than to live purely and holily to strive daily after perfection and enlightenment, as these books teach us; but that can only be done by a tender love and imitation of Jesus Christ (29:205)."

In these, his own words, we have John Colet's ideal of life, to live purely and holily, to strive daily after perfection and enlightenment -- by a tender love and imitation of Jesus Christ. Colet had been moved by the invigorating spirit of the Renaissance as it passed over the western world but he vehemently repudiated its paganism as well as the so-called reformers who followed in its wake. He saw beyond the day in which he lived and glimpsed perhaps behind the veil of time the havoc they would work.

What though they come with scroll and pen
And grave as a shaven clerk,
By this sign you shall know them
That they ruin and make dark.

Nothing definite is known of Colet's early education, but we may infer that it differed little from the ordinary training of boys in his time. We can gather from a treatise of Sir John Elyot, "The Governor," published in 1531 that those aspiring to a learned education were expected to begin very early in life to acquire it. Greek and Latin Grammar according to Sir John ought to be begun when the boy is seven; at twelve he shall have so well mastered the Latin tongue that he can thenceforth confine his efforts to Greek (5: 672-673).

After his early years of preparation, Colet continued his studies at Oxford under Grocyn who had returned from Italy in 1491. About two years after Grocyn's return, Colet left England for a tour of Europe without which it seems a man's education was considered incomplete. Barclay alludes to this eagerness for foreign education in the "Ship of Fools:"

One runneth to Almayne, another to France,
To Paris, Padwy, Lombardy or Spayne,
Another to Bonony, Rome or Orleans;
To Caen, Toulouse, Athens or Colayne;
And at the last returneth home agayne
More ignorant.*

Colet "returned home agayne" and was ordained priest March 25, 1497-8 (36: IV., 98). Shortly after, he began a course of lectures at Oxford which attracted and kept the attention of many learned men. At Florence he had listened to the preaching of Savanarola from which he had acquired an enthusiasm for Scriptural studies and had caught some of the Friar's burning zeal for reform of abuses. He first gives us an inkling of his intention to leave the old methods of scholasticism by his new treatment of the Epistles of St. Paul in his Oxford lectures in which he abandoned the writings for the man. He made St. Paul live again in the lecture halls of Oxford and all the University flocked to hear him. Among the listeners was Erasmus who soon became an intimate friend of the brilliant lecturer. Erasmus, it is believed, aroused in his new made friend, his own distrust and contempt of the schoolmen and scholastic philosophy.

In the course of a few years many changes came over England and a change, too, in Colet's sphere. In 1504 he was made Dean of St. Paul's and in London continued to be the intimate friend and spiritual advisor of Sir Thomas More. The next year his father who had been twice Mayor of London, died leaving his fortune to his son, John, who devoted it to public purposes.

His love for classical studies urged him to initiate the younger generation to the delights and benefits which the Greek and Latin classics provide for the earnest student. He began the plans for the grammar school which gave the first impetus to middle-class education and in 1509 was rejoiced by the reception of the first youthful scholars. *

While intent on the encouragement of classical studies of which he knew the true value -- ("it is only Christian men guard even heathen things") -- Dean Colet, in his work at St. Paul's was daily reminded of the abuse that could be made of them. So in addition to his labours in connection with the grammar school he devoted himself to the task of reviving Scriptural Divinity at the Universities. He was indefatigable; he talked, he preached, he persuaded, he urged, he argued, he stood firm as a rock against the incoming tide of revolt that was threatening Christian life.

"Pride and a little scratching pen,
(Had) dried and split the hearts of men."

Colet was heart and soul for true reform and he began where he thought he should begin with his own clergy. In

* This grammar school, begun at the east end of St. Paul's churchyard, was transferred to Hammersmith in 1884.

his sermon of Convocation (1511-12) he took for his text, "Be ye not conformed to the world," and regardless of consequences he plainly denounced the prevailing abuses and gave a "right fruitful admonition concerning the order of a good Christian man's life." (5:679)

Meanwhile his friendship with Linacre, Erasmus and Sir Thomas More had in no wise diminished and when a breathing space in the routine day gave them time for recreation they used to meet in Stepney at the home of Colet's mother who, was "still so fair -- at 90! -- and cheerful you would think she had never shed a tear (5:683)." She took great pleasure in entertaining her son's guests and made their short holidays doubly agreeable. She enjoyed their witty conversation and the adroit way in which Erasmus used to turn the argument by an impromptu tale when the talk had become too hot. This, no doubt, often occurred for Colet was by nature of a "hot and haughty spirit and impatient of the least affront." (5:676) Moreover, his heart and soul were in his earnest words. "When he speaks," wrote Erasmus, "You would think he was more than man; it is not with voice alone, but with eyes and countenance and with his whole demeanor (5:676)." There was a single-heartedness about him, a sincere fervour coupled with a pure and blameless life that gave him great influence.

Another thing in his favour was his love for children which, however, he manifested in a somewhat curious way. "He that spareth the rod hateth his son (Prov. XIII., 24)" was no idle proverb to him. Though kind he did not spare correction. Excessively severe discipline it seems was the fault of the times: the paternal spirit of the monastic school had given way to the harshness, not to say, cruelty of the professional educator. The common opinion was that the rod was a remarkable aid in the development of linguistic powers and that Greek and the "verrye Romaine eloquence" could only be well learned when the rod of correction was frequently applied. This system continued throughout the Tudor period. More than one humane humanist complained of it but in spite of, perhaps because of, his intense interest in the children confided to him, Colet allowed something of this sort of discipline to be in practice at St. Paul's (5:688).

A visit to St. Paul's may throw a light on the character of its founder, admirable and lovable in spite of "specks of human infirmity." The front of the building next the church bears the inscription: -- Schola catechizationis puerorum in Christi Opt. Max. fide et bonis literis, Anno Christi, MDX. (5:685) First there is the porch, which reminds one of St. Mark's first school at Alexandria where the Hearers or Catechumens assembled in the porch of the Church. Here Colet's catechumens receive their religious instruction. To

stimulate zeal in learning, no one is admitted until he can read and write, and answer the questions in his Catechism. Within the building a large classroom is divided by curtains into apartments; the first room is for the lower class which is taught by John Rightwyse, the usher; the next is for a higher class where William Lyly, the Master, sits before a little desk. The last room is a small chapel where Mass is said daily for the scholars. An image of the Infant Jesus stands before them; he is the Master here. Three times a day at regular hours they honour Him with prayers and hymns, but in the early morning when He comes to the little altar He looks for His children and is disappointed. This is a Schola Catechizationis it is true, but the director considers daily Mass a waste of time! The students, busy at their lessons, prostrate for the Elevation when they hear the tinkle of the acolyte's bell behind the curtain, but when it rings the next time they rise and return to their books (5:685). Colet himself said Mass on Sunday and holydays only, giving the time of daily Mass to the preparation of his sermons. A Christian school this is, but devoid of Catholic spirit. A strange way of making practical his ideal which is, he says, "by this scole especially to increase the knowledge and worshipping of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and good Christian life and manners in the children." (5:686) This perhaps is one of those mental twists which we sometimes see in men of noble character and which must remain inexplicable till the end of time.

Opinions such as these, coupled with his ardent desires for reform, before long involved Colet in difficulties with authority. The accusations brought up against him were dismissed as frivolous by Warham, the primate (5:682) but in Colet's attitude toward scholasticism, Catholic devotions and above all, the daily Mass, we find a singular want of sympathy with the mind of the Church. None can doubt his earnest zeal, his love for his Divine Master, his hatred of the abuses and the worldliness which had crept into his beloved Church, but it seems a zeal too unrestrained, a love too austere, a hatred which would include the sinner as well as the sin. The shadow of Lutheranism was already darkening England's skies. It is not to be wondered at, then, that Colet is claimed by Protestants as a precursor of the reform (5:691) though he believed himself a loyal son of the Church in whose communion he died in 1519.

Grocyn

Another of Blessed Thomas More's companions, a member of the little band of scholars, was William Grocyn who was born at Wiltshire, c.1446 and educated for the Church at Winchester and at New College, Oxford, where he was elected to Fellowship in 1468 (38:XIII,483) After several years in pastoral work he became prebendary at Lincoln Cathedral in 1485. (9:30). Richard Flemming was Dean of the Cathedral and probably gave Grocyn his first inspiration to visit Italy. Flemming had many friends there, had lived for several years in Rome and had the honour of dedicating to Sixtus IV. the first important humanist verse + written by an Englishman. On his return to England he found life uneventful and in his conversations with Grocyn his love for Italy, his zeal for learning, kindled and fed the flame of desire in the heart of his friend. In 1488, Grocyn satisfied his great desire and spent several years studying the classic languages and literature in company with Thomas Linacre under the direction of Politian and Chalcondylas (9:31).

Grocyn studied the classics from a sincere love of learning, seeking to reproduce only that which was most ennobling in the pagan world (29:203). He, himself, lived a chaste and holy life (5:678). More conservative than his friends, in spite of having introduced Greek at Oxford, he remained faithful to the mediaeval schoolmen, "preferred Aristotle to Plato and described the difference between the two philosophers as simply that between a world of science and a world of myths" (29:249)

Erasmus seemed to think that Grocyn adhered to Catholic dogma with excessive strictness and considered it necessary to apologize for this weakness, which he thought somewhat superstitious, urging as excuse that his friend had been trained from early youth in scholastic theology (5:678).

In 1468, before he left England for Italy, Grocyn had been professor of Divinity at Magdalen College, Oxford, and on his return in 1490 took up his work of teaching again, but this time at Exeter College. Later he taught Greek at Oxford having among his pupils his newly found friend, Erasmus.

Grocyn is acknowledged one of the greatest Greek scholars of his generation in Europe (32:544). His proof of the authorship of the "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy" opened the way to biblical criticism and proved to the continent the

ability of English scholars.

Grocyn's adherence to the schoolmen did not blind him to the merits of the new learning. Appreciating the greatness of the nobler Renaissance, while in Italy he gathered its fruits with all the love of a true scholar that he might bear traditions (9:34). During his lifetime Grocyn enjoyed an extraordinary reputation as a humanist, and because of the decay of learning in Italy at the time, he with Linacre came to be looked upon by the Italians as the successor to the great southern humanists (9:42). The direct Italian influence on English scholarship may be said to have ended with the generation which Grocyn had trained at Oxford, but its cultural influence was permanent (9:46).

Grocyn's distaste for appearing in print prevents us from confirming to our own satisfaction his reputation as a humanist. Except for an epigram, a few lines of verse about a lady who threw a snowball at him, and a letter to his friend Aldus, nothing remains.

Grocyn's love for the new learning and his attachment to the old scholasticism present to us a man of two sides; the spirit of the Renaissance and of Mediaevalism harmoniously blended (9:35). On the one hand he is the humanist, the critic, the love of Greek; on the other, the schoolman, satisfying his thirst for knowledge in Italy and returning to England with a desire for seclusion; having the applause of men yet caring naught for it; known the world over, yet living quietly in a small circle of friends who knew him as the "most upright and best of all the Britons (8:ep, CII)."

Desiderius Erasmus

Erasmus, though not an Englishman by birth, is so intimately connected with the Renaissance in England and exercised such influence there that no study of the period or of contemporary scholars would be complete without something more than a mere mention of his name. He was born October 28, 1467 (4:XIV,121) at Rotterdam from which city he took the name Roterodamus. The city has expressed its gratitude for the renown he brought it by erecting a statue in his honour near the principal church.

At the age of nine Erasmus was sent to a school at Deventer where he had Alexander Hegius for his master and among his school-fellows Adrianus Florentius, afterward Pope Adrian VI. His mother who had followed him to Deventer to keep an eye on him, died there of the plague when Erasmus was but thirteen, and his father, much affected by the loss, soon followed her. Erasmus was left to the guardianship of three men who proved to be nothing more than three rascals. They agreed to devote the boy to a religious life in order to obtain his small patrimony and placed him in a convent in Brabant. He had no vocation and as a consequence of his enforced entrance conceived a hatred of the life and of those who lived it. He was finally professed, however, at Stein near Tergou in 1486 when he was only nineteen. He was given liberty to devote himself to study and while at Emmaus wrote "De Contemptu Mundi." At this time he evinced none of the discontent of which he later complained (33:6). Indeed, he wrote that he tried to find consolation in the thought that an honest man may find contentment in any vocation which Providence may assign him. He was restless, nevertheless, in spite of comparative freedom and longed to be released. It is most probable that in this enforced retirement he nourished that bitter feeling toward the monks which he ever afterward expressed with so much sarcasm.

In 1490 Erasmus was taken from the monastery by Henry de Bergis, Bishop of Cambrai, who wished to make the young scholar his secretary. The Canons knowing by this time his sad lack of vocation were doubtless willing enough to let Erasmus go. The Bishop was planning a trip to Rome which, however, was never realized. Erasmus then went to Paris to study, but finding it difficult to subsist without money, he returned to Cambrai. From there he went to Holland and thence again to Paris. He was obliged to study incessantly and raise himself by his own industry. During this second sojourn in Paris he was fortunate enough to meet William Lord Mountjoy who became his fast friend and afterward gave him an annual pen-

sion (17:15). Urged by his new friend, Erasmus made a short visit to England in 1499 and returned again in 1505 but in 1506 he repaired to Italy. At Turin he received his laureate in theology (26: III., 336) and then visited the principal cities, seeking out the learned of each and searching the libraries for new knowledge. He was eagerly and warmly welcomed by Cardinal Giovanni de Medici, afterward Pope Leo X., who was so great a friend to Erasmus' newly made friends in England, for Grocyn and Linacre had formed part of the famous school in the Medici palace and had been schoolfellows of the future Pontiff.

While in Rome, Erasmus heard of Henry VIII's accession to the throne of England and not even the temptation of a Cardinal's hat could persuade him to remain away from the land whither the solicitations of his English admirers called him. On his arrival there, in spite of the young king's desire to have him at court, Erasmus accepted the professorship of Greek and Theology at Cambridge tendered him by its Chancellor Blessed John Fisher (26: III., 336). This position he held for only a short time. He spent five years in England but never accepted a permanent office. This was the period of his greatest literary productivity (36: V., 511), and most probably the period of greatest contentment, for he was much loved by his English friends and flattered almost to the saturation point. In 1521 he left England and settled definitely in Basle where he could oversee the publication of his works undertaken by Froben. In order to be entirely free, he rejected many advantageous offers which his reputation brought him from every direction. At this period he was the most popular and most celebrated man of letters in all Europe. Holding aloof from all centres of learning, even from that of Pope Leo X., he could still keep the attention and interest of all, popes and princes, ecclesiastics and laymen. Pope Paul III. wanted to make him a Cardinal (36: V., 513) but Erasmus declined the honour. Disease had gained the mastery after a lifetime of combat. His strength failed completely and he had decided to accept the invitation of Mary, Regent of the Netherlands, to live in Brabant, when death seized him at Basle, July 12, 1536.

He died in communion with Rome but without the Last Sacraments. Protestants have made much of the fact that no priest was present at his death. This, however, is not extraordinary since all Catholics who could do so had left Basle on the invasion of the so-called Evangelicals in 1529. (26:337) Basle was not a particularly inviting spot for Catholics, much less so for priests, after that year and it is probable that not a priest was to be found in Basle at the time of Erasmus' death.

Opinions of Erasmus are as numerous and various as there are men to form them. He seems to be the sphinx of the Renaissance. His letters at one time show him the staunch advocate and defender of the truth, a loving, devoted friend; at another, hesitating, as if watching and waiting to throw himself on the lower balance of the scale, and holding up to the public view with bitter sarcasm the defects of those who had been most kind to him.

Even his portrait * expressed him as we know he was not. It presents to us an aesthetic face, drawn by a life-long suffering which might have made him a saint; delicate hands, with the long, slender, well-shaped fingers that one naturally associates with nobility; the simple, dark robe of a scholar whose love of comfort and luxury unfolds itself as the rich fur turns back from the cuffs and lapel; the book, with his own name on the pages, betraying the vanity that was like a disease in him.

The religious ideal of Erasmus was entirely humanistic (36: V., 513); he laboured to reconcile the ancient faith with humanism and with this end in view cast aside the scholastic method which was so repugnant to him. He had been educated in Paris by scholastic theologians, and, in spite of himself, when he came to Oxford he used their methods of argumentation. This seems to have annoyed Colet who hated the schoolmen's habit of arguing for argument's sake (31:102). Erasmus finally became unable to understand or appreciate the men of the age that lay behind him; mediaevalism was his bete noire, dogmatism he abhorred though he forever protested loyalty to the dogmatic Church. Janssen says of him (15: III., 17), "Erasmus did, however, seriously propose a revision of the doctrines laid down by the early Church. He was inclined to look upon the transactions, the controversies and the doctrinal decisions of the christological period as the first step in the continuous deterioration of the Church. The Church had since, he considered, departed from her ancient evangelical philosophy which in its turn had degenerated into the scholastic methods by which the actual ruin of Christian doctrine and Christian life had been brought about. During the whole of his literary career he waged war against the barren scholasticism with an acrimony that had no parallel, and its representatives were a butt for his ridicule and contempt. Ever since the domination of this scholasticism had set in, the whole western world, he declared, had been subject to a spirit of Judaism and Pharisaism which had crushed the true life of Christianity and theology and perverted it to mere monastic sanctity and empty ceremonialism. The contempt for the Middle

* Portrait by Holbein-Academy of Fine Arts, Parma.

Ages as for a period of darkness and spiritual bondage, of sophistry in learning and mere outwardness in life and conduct, originated with Erasmus and his school, and was transmitted by them to the later so-called reformers. Thanks to the high esteem in which Erasmus was held for his culture and scholarship, his ironical and calumnious writings against the mediaeval culture and against the influence of the Church and the traditions of Christian schools, passed for a long time unchallenged."

Abbot Gasquet's opinion follows close on Professor Janssen's (12:167). "In the first place," he says, "comes the important problem of Erasmus' real position as regards the Church itself and its authority. That he was outspoken on many points, even on points which we now regard as well within the border-line of settled matters of faith and practice, may be at once admitted, but he never appears to have wavered in his determination at all costs to remain true and loyal to the Pope, and the other constituted ecclesiastical. The open criticism of time-worn institutions in which he indulged, and the sweeping condemnation of the ordinary teachings of the theological schools which he never sought to disguise, brought him early in his public life into fierce antagonism with many devoted believers in the system then in vogue."

Erasmus saw with remarkably clear and penetrating vision the abuses in the Church but he looked on them with a cold, unloving heart, not the heart of the loyal child he protested to be. His mocking wit satirized recklessly not only absurdities but even sacred things. It is not surprising that many suspected him of being in league with Luther, but from a letter which he wrote to the Bishop of Tuy, in Galicia, March 25, 1520, we learn how little sympathy he felt for the heresiarchs.

"You caution me," he writes, "against entangling myself with Luther. I have taken your advice, and have done my utmost to keep things quiet. Luther's party have urged me to join him, and Luther's enemies have done their best to drive me to it by their furious attacks on me in their sermons. Neither have succeeded. Christ I know; Luther I know not. The Roman Church I know, and death will not part me from it, till the Church departs from Christ. I abhor sedition. Would that Luther and the Germans abhorred it equally! It is strange to see how the two factions goad each other on, as if they were in collusion. Luther has hurt himself more than he has hurt his opponents by his last effusions, while the attacks on him are so absurd that many think the Pope wrong in spite of themselves. I approve those who stand by the Pope but I could wish them to be wiser than they are. They would devour Luther off-hand. They may eat him boiled or roast for aught I care, but they mistake in linking him and me together,

and they can finish him more easily without me than with me. I am surprised at Alexander (the papal legate); we were once friends. He was instructed to conciliate when he was sent over, the Pope not wishing to push matters to extremity. He would have done better to act with me. He would have found me with him and not against him on the Pope's prerogative. They pretend that Luther has borrowed from me. No lie can be more impudent. He may have borrowed from me as heretics borrow from the Evangelists and Apostles but not a syllable else. I beseech you, protect me from such calumnies. Let my letters be examined. I may have written unguardedly but that is all. Inquire into my conversation. You will find that I have said nothing except that Luther ought to be answered and not crushed. Even now I would prefer that things should be quietly considered and not embittered by platform railing. I would have the Church purified of evil, lest the good in it suffer by connection with what is indefensible; but in avoiding the Scylla of Luther, I would have us also avoid Charybdis. If this be a sin then I won my guilt. I have sought to save the dignity of the Roman Pontiff, the honour of Catholic theology, and the welfare of Christendom. I have not defended Luther, even in jest, -- But be assured of this, if any movement is in progress, injurious to the Christian religion or dangerous to the public peace or to the supremacy of the Holy See, it does not proceed from Erasmus. Time will show it. I have not deviated, in what I have written one hair's-breadth from the Church's teaching. We must bear almost anything rather than throw the world into confusion. There are seasons when we must even conceal the truth. The actual facts of things are not to be blurted out at all times and places, and in all companies. But every wise man knows that doctrines and usages have been introduced into the Church which have no real sanction, partly by custom, partly by obsequious canonist, partly by scholastic definitions, partly by the tricks and arts of secular sovereigns. Such excrescences must be removed, though the medicine must be administered cautiously, lest it make the disorder worse and the patient die. -- For myself, I prefer to be silent and introduce no novelties into religion. Many great persons have entreated me to support Luther. I have answered always that I will support him when he is on the Catholic side. They have asked me to draw up a formula of faith. I reply that I know none save the Creed of the Catholic Church and I advise every one who consults me to submit to the Pope. I was the first to oppose the publication of Luther's books. I recommended Luther himself to publish^{nothing} revolutionary. I feared always that revolution would be the end, and I would have done more had I not been afraid that I might be found fighting against the spirit of God (10:237).* Erasmus expressed the realization of this fear later when he said that under the pretext of religious motives the Reformation was the quarrel of those who had not against those who had.

In the same year, 1520, in a letter to Cardinal Campeggio, he says, "The corruption of the Roman court may require reform, extensive and immediate, but I and the like of me are not called on to take a work like that upon ourselves. I would rather see things left as they are than see a revolution which may lead to one knows not what. Others may be martyrs if they like. I aspire to no such honour. Some hate me for being a Lutheran; some for not being a Lutheran. You may assure yourself that Erasmus has been and always will be a faithful subject of the Roman See (10:253)." These seem sincere words, yet two years later (1522) when Pope Adrian called to him from the Vatican (1: I., 700), "Arise, arise, arise, in defense of the Lord, and for His glory; use, as hitherto you have done, the marvelous gifts that He has bestowed upon you" --- the answer was "No;" not a decisive "no" but a hesitating, procrastinating "no." He would not rise and use his pen in defense of the Church, though he meant to be her loyal child. What was the reason for such a refusal? The reason was that the Church was not so dear to Erasmus as he would have us believe. Erasmus' dearest treasure was -- Erasmus. And only when Erasmus was in danger would Erasmus take up his pen and write.

By this time it was almost open war. Henry VIII. had written his "Defense of the Seven Sacraments" which was followed by Luther's "Reply" which brought Blessed Thomas More and Blessed John Fisher into the field of controversy. But Erasmus was still silent. He had been warned that Henry VIII. was surprised at his silence and under some pressure he wrote to Archbishop Warham, "The condition of things is extremely dangerous. I have to steer my own course so as not to desert the truth of Christ through fear of man, and to avoid unnecessary risks. Luther has been sent into the world by the genius of discord. Every corner of it has been disturbed by it. All admit that the corruptions of the Church required a drastic medicine. But drugs wrongly given make the sick man worse I suppose I must write something about him. I will read his books and see what can be done (10:268)."

Erasmus hated controversy. He could not bear to be disturbed, but the noose was tightening about his neck and both Lutherans and Catholics were pulling the end. Erasmus' attitude toward religious questions, it must be added, was conditioned rather by literary interest than by interior conviction. His demeanour was apt to be influenced by anxiety for peace and by personal consideration (36: V., 512). These "Personal considerations" brought forth the "Spongia" in 1523, as an answer to Ulrich von Hutten's "Expostulation" which had been occasioned by Erasmus' refusing to see von Hutten in Basl in 1522. Among other things he repudiates von Hutten's accusation of inconsistency in his dealing with the Holy See

(7:62); "All will, I think, agree that the Church is in Rome, for the multitude of evils do not prevent the continued existence of the Church, otherwise we should have no churches at all. And I believe that her faith is sound, for although some godless men are contained within her communion the Church continues to exist in the good." He then goes on to show that although he holds the Catholic doctrine of the supremacy of the Pope, as it was then defined, he does not anticipate the dogma of Papal Infallibility to which of course he was not bound. After the appearance of the "Spongia" all association with the reformers ceased (36: V., 512).

Erasmus finally resolved to heed the urgent appeals made to him by Adrian VI. and Henry VIII. He took for the first time a decided stand, fearful doubtless that he might lose the esteem and confidence of both parties. He had complained previously "that the new movement begat only commotion, moral disorganization and the interruption, if not the complete ruin of learned studies." These abuses he traced to Luther's denial of free will (36: V., 513). To refute Luther's statements he wrote in 1524 the "Diatribes de libero arbitrio," a work not so profound, but full of proofs skillfully drawn from the Bible and from reason. Luther replied by "De servo arbitrio (the same year)," in which he laid down the statement of the absolute incompetency of man in his fallen state to perform moral acts. This was the final break with Luther, but notwithstanding this the distrust of Erasmus was still widespread although throughout his life the attitude of the Popes toward him was never inimical. In answer to Luther's "De servo arbitrio" he wrote, "The decrees of the Catholic Church have so much weight for me, that even if my limited understanding were unable to grasp what the Church commands, I should still hold fast to her, as to an oracle proceeding from God (29:184)." Yet to Vives he writes, "I have written a treatise on Free Will but to confess the truth I lost my own. There my heart dictated one thing, and my pen wrote another" (5:695).

But the dispute with Luther was a mere episode in the remarkable literary career of Erasmus (29:184). He lived for letters. "I abhor the evangelicals," he says in a letter to the Archbishop of Cologne, "as for other reasons so because it is through them that literature is declining in every place, entertained with coldness and contempt and upon the point of perishing, and without letters what is life?"

"Without letters what is life?" is the key to his character; the revival of learning is the object of his existence. He is the pioneer of the new learning in the north as Petrarch was in the south (29:190). He inherited the new literary Latin from Petrarch with whom "Personal sentiment,

passion and colour invaded the formal language of the schools and transformed it ." (29:118) When Erasmus has pronounced the reformers "enemies to learning, as far as he is concerned the last word is spoken and they may be dismissed (29:190)."
Erasmus "belonged to the early humanist tradition, to those who returned to ancient languages for their own sakes and who remained free from the corruptions of heathen antiquity to which the later humanists of Italy and Germany were so facile a prey (29:203)."

However much we may doubt his Catholicity, his position as a humanist remains unchallenged. Erasmus looked upon teaching as the highest of callings (28:180). To a Cambridge pedagogue who disparaged his profession, Erasmus replied that Christ had not despised children; that no one could do better than to bring the little ones to him. Throughout his works many references to educational aims, content and processes may be found, but he has expressed his views on this subject at some length in several treatises (22: II., 61): *Institutio Christiani Matrimonii* (On Christian Matrimony) contains a chapter on the training of children; *De Ratione Studii* (On the Method of Study) was composed for Dean Colet when St. Paul's school was being organized; *De Pueris Statim ac Liberaliter Instituendis* (On the Liberal Education of children from their earliest years); and *De Civiltate Morum Puerilium* (On Courtesy of Manners in boys).

In *De Civiltate* we find his aim of education: "The first and most important part is that the youthful mind may absorb the seeds of piety; next, that it may love and thoroughly learn the liberal arts; third, that it may be prepared for the duties of life; and fourth, that it may from the earliest years be straightforwardly accustomed to the rudiments of good manners." Erasmus, like Vittorino de Feltre, believed that the schools should prepare the child for active participation in life and no one who shows ability should be deprived of education. He insists on the importance of home training and the influence of the mother. In *De Ratione Studii* are found Erasmus' ideas on the true method of education. "In order that the teacher might be thoroughly up to his work he should not merely be a master of one particular branch of study. He should himself have travelled through the whole circle of knowledge ---. Nothing should be beneath his observation which can illustrate history or the meaning of the poets. But you will say what a load you are putting on the back of the poor teacher! It is so, but I burden the one to relieve the many. I want the teacher to have traversed the whole range of knowledge that it may spare each of his scholars doing it." Erasmus held the truly humanistic view of education. He would have only Latin in the classroom and even in ordinary intercourse. His ideal was "a universal language, Latin; a

universal Church; a uniform standard of culture, and perpetual peace (34:113)."

Besides Erasmus' writings on education the works which are more widely known are the "Adagia," the "Enchiridion" "Moriae Encomium," "Novum Instrumentum," and the "Colloquia." It was in 1500 while in Paris that Erasmus worked on the "Adagia," a collection of the sayings of the ancients with his own comments. This and the "Colloquia" were very well received and several times re-edited. "The Colloquia" is eminently a book for scholars written in the elegant Latin which Erasmus could employ so effectively. --- It is entirely too bitter to be always admirable but many of its satirical parts give an excellent idea, though undoubtedly exaggerated if taken as a picture of the times, of the conditions of education at the moment (32:440)."

Describing the "Adagia" Erasmus says: "Laying aside all serious labours, and indulging in a more dainty kind of study I strolled through the gardens provided by various authors, culling as I went the adages most remarkable for their antiquity and excellence, like so many flowers of various sorts, of which I have made a nosegay (24:243)."

About the year 1500 Erasmus began the "Enchiridion" a manual of piety, written at the request of the wife of a military gentleman whom Erasmus describes as a "man of gay life, who was no one's enemy so much as his own." The "Enchiridion" lays great stress upon the intellectual side of religion. Erasmus places knowledge on an equal footing with prayer and almsdeeds, as weapons in the spiritual combat. "Whosoever," he says, "will take upon him to fight against the whole host of vices, of which the seven be counted as chief captains, must provide him two special weapons, prayer and knowledge, otherwise called learning. Prayer, verily, is the more excellent as she that cometh and talketh familiarly with Almighty God. Yet for all this doctrine is no less necessary (37)."

In another place he compares prayer and knowledge to Aaron and Moses who led the Israelites out of Egypt (37). "I cannot tell whether that thou, fled from Egypt, mightest without great jeopardy commit thyself to so long a journey, so hard and so full of difficulty, without the captains, Aaron and Moses. Aaron, which was charged with things dedicate to the service of God's temple, betokeneth prayer. By Moses is figured the law of God." Erasmus also defends here one of his

*This work was condemned by the Sorbonne and finally placed on the index (36: V., 514).

favourite theses, -- the study of profane authors as a help to that of Sacred Scripture.

In spite of many good qualities of the "Enchiridion" the reader is disappointed in the tone of its comments on the Church which are biting and antagonistic. When he sent a copy of it to Colet, Erasmus wrote: "The Enchiridion I wrote to display neither genius nor eloquence, but simply for this -- to counteract the vulgar error of those who think that religion consists in ceremonies, and in more than Jewish observances while they neglect what really pertains to piety. I have tried to teach as it were, the art of piety in the same way as others have laid down the rules of (military) discipline (8:94)."

A few years after the publication of the "Enchiridion" Erasmus was able to fulfill his great desire and undertake a journey to Rome. Here he was flattered and feted by all and lived in a society which suited his taste, but at which he was scandalized. His keen, penetrating eye measured Pope, Cardinal, Prelate with a strict standard and without allowance for the frailty of human nature. The result of this sojourn was the "Encomium Moriae" begun on his journey northward as a means of beguiling his fatigues, and finished during a week of convalescence at the home of Sir Thomas More. It is a biting satire upon every possible folly; no class or calling of men is spared, those connected with the Church being most severely handled. This was ever his weakness but it is strikingly revealed in the "Praise of Folly." With regard to the monks "he is nothing if not prejudiced and malicious. -- In dealing with the ecclesiastical abuses of his day, Erasmus made the profound and un-Catholic mistake of judging according to his own private judgment -- a very partial and superficial judgment at best (37)."

However, being so far removed from the day in which Erasmus lived and wrote it may be more just to let one who knew him and his times pass judgment. Sir Thomas More, at whose home the "Praise of Folly" was written, never repented of his share in it. "When Erasmus wrote his "Praise of Folly, the whole of Europe was Catholic; Luther's name was yet unknown except in Wittenburg where he bore the character of a good Catholic. There was no prospect of heresy on any large scale but among all good men there were hopes of Catholic Reformation. Whether the satire of Erasmus was likely to hasten it might well be doubted. More thought it would and welcomed the book. In later years, long before it was officially condemned he regretted its appearance, not because he had changed his opinion of the book itself, but because he saw that it had been inopportune; and was abused by heretics and injurious to feeble minded Catholics. It will be better, however, to hear his own words on the subject. In 1532 he wrote thus to Erasmus:

'Your adversaries cannot be ignorant how candidly you confess that, before these pestilent heresies arose, which have since spread everywhere and upset everything, you treated certain matters in a way you would not have treated them had you been able to guess that such enemies of religion and such traitors would ever arise. You would then have put what you had to say more mildly and with more limitations. You wrote strongly then because you were indignant at seeing how some cherished their vices as if they were virtues (2:).'"

In writing the "Confutation of Tyndale" Sir Thomas was influenced no doubt by the impression that Erasmus had been taken too seriously by his enemies and was in danger of being denounced as a heretic or at least as a disloyal son of Mother Church. Erasmus had railed against abuses in a caustic way just as More himself had done in his "Dialogue, Quoth He and Quoth I," "but," he continues, "in these days in which Tyndale hath with the infection of his contagious heresies so sore poisoned malicious and new-fangled folk...in these days in which men, by their own default, misconstrue and take harm out of the very Scriptures of God, until men better amend, if any man would now translate Moria into English, or some works either that I have myself written ere this, albeit there be none harm therein, folk yet being given to take harm of that which is good I would not only 'my darling's' (i.e. Erasmus') books, but mine own also, help to burn them both with mine own hands, rather than folk should (through their own fault) take harm of them, seeing that I see them likely in these days so to do (2:86-87)."

Of all his works the "Novum Instrumentum" a new Latin translation of the New Testament caused the least adverse criticism though it received its share. Mr. Froude (10:112) seems to think that the Bible had hitherto been altogether unknown to the laity and lauds Erasmus to the skies for his gift to humanity. As a matter of fact more than seventy editions of the whole Bible, not to mention separate editions of the Psalms, etc., were published between 1450 when Gutenberg produced the first printed Bible and 1516 when Erasmus published his New Testament. Its greatest value lies in its improved Latinity. Erasmus seems always to have been afraid that the revival of letters which he hoped for would result in the revival of paganism as a system of morality. His object in writing the novum Instrumentum was to 'restore that old and true theology which had been so long obscured by the subtleties of the schoolmen.' At this period he realized vaguely perhaps the vanity of all learning that is not referred back to God and he endeavored by the "Novum Instrumentum" to direct scholars toward the true interpretation of life. He comes back to the words of Christ, "The children of darkness are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

*Platonists, Pythagoreans, and the disciples of all other philosophers, are well instructed and ready to fight for their sect. Why do not Christians with yet more abundant zeal espouse the cause of their Master and Prince (31:326)." Words of zeal, no doubt, but we have seen how slow he himself was to fight for his Prince while still protesting loyalty. Was he loyal? It is difficult to judge, but the Master and Prince has said, "He that is not with me is against me and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth (Matt. XII., 30)."

Blessed Thomas More

Like Cato firm, like Aristides just,
Like rigid Cincinnatus, nobly poor,--
A dauntless soul erect, who smiled on death.
---Thomson.

There is a charm about the central figure of this group of Renaissance scholars that attracts even those who have no sympathy with his cause. His learning, wit, nobility of character, his tenacity of principle draw the believer and the agnostic alike.

Sir Thomas More's span of life bridged one of the most interesting and momentous periods of history. Life must have been a fascinating thing in his century. Nowadays, there are so many nine-day-wonders that we expect them rather than wonder at them. But in his time so many new and wondrous happenings were taking place that meant so much more than do many of the sensations of our day.

From the time of Sir Thomas' arrival on our planet in 1478 to his death on the scaffold in 1535 the world held its head for sheer dizziness at the thrilling events it witnessed. When Sir Thomas was fourteen Columbus discovered a new continent beyond the seas; Granada fell and with it the power of the Moro in Spain. Still more startling events were happening to effect more closely men's minds. Feudalism crashed to the earth and from its dust rose new ideas of thought and art and government. Machiavelli produced "Il Principe," Erasmus the "Christian Prince," and Sir Thomas himself "Utopia," all of them putting forth new ideals of political organization. In 1517 Luther nailed his theses to the door of the Church in Wittenberg and the echo of his hammer went round the world. England, too, had awakened; Grocyn brought her Greek, Linacre, an interest in the cure of bodies, and Colet, an interest in the cure of souls. The New Learning was in the air.

Sir Thomas epitomizes the best spirit of the age. The age called for reformation, Sir Thomas was a reformer. The age thirsted for learning, Sir Thomas, the scholar, encouraged it. As a reformer he had a holy discontent when wrongs were left unredressed; as a scholar, he sought for learning for himself and for others, too. But both his desires, of reform and of learning were tempered by his Faith which showed him that society could only be reformed when the individual was taught to appreciate and put into practice the high principles which the Church put before him, and that learning could be no advantage, but rather a hindrance, if it in any way drew the scholar from the path of duty.

Sir Thomas was early started on the road to learning at St. Anthony's School on Threadneedle street, London, where Nicholas Holt was master (2:6). When he was thirteen he was sent to the household of the Archbishop of Canterbury, later Cardinal. Morton. This excellent prelate deeply influenced the young man's mind. Archbishop Morton gave him his first impressions of the Church and showed him what a true Churchman and a loyal subject ought to be. The Archbishop was much pleased at More's wit and eagerness for study and soon sent him to Oxford. Little is known of his career there except that he was poor and loved nothing but his studies (2:9-10). At the end of two years the elder More summoned his son back to London, afraid, doubtless, that Thomas would acquire too great a love for literature and turn away from the legal career for which he had destined him. Thomas, however, proved an obedient son. He took up the study of law and made such a success of it as to be the admiration of his fellow barristers. He was not too busy to give some time to literature and the cultivation of his spiritual life. At this time he was undecided as to the state of life he should adopt.

Seeborn (31:151), Nisard (23:167) and others have much misinterpreted his thoughts on this subject. More was not disgusted with monastic corruption. He could see beyond the failings of the individual the monastic ideal of which he was a devoted admirer. There is no proof that his decision to decline the monastic life was based on distrust of the monastic system. After much prayer on the subject, in the spring of 1505, finally taking the advice of Colet, his confessor and spiritual guide, Sir Thomas married Jane Colt. Little did he know how much ink would be used up about this most natural decision (2:53).

When Margaret, their eldest daughter was about five years old, her mother died leaving four children (2:55). Erasmus informs us that Sir Thomas married a second time shortly after the death of his first wife. His second wife was Alice Middleton, "nec bella, nec puella" as he said to Erasmus, but a devoted mother to his four little children (2:113).

Sir Thomas became renowned as a barrister and by his methods became very popular with the citizens. "While he was still dependent on his fees," says Erasmus, "he gave to all true and friendly counsel, considering their interest rather than his own; he persuaded many to settle with their opponents out of court as the cheaper course--for some men delight in litigation--he would still indicate the method that was least expensive." (2:66) He would never defend an unjust case, and if the client insisted on litigation in spite of the injustice of his plea More would send him off to seek his advocate elsewhere (2:67).

More's popularity soon brought him to the notice of the King with the result that he was sent on an embassy. He cared not at all for such employment which kept him from home and was rather expensive for him as he had to keep up two establishments, one in England and one in Belgium (2:69). While in Belgium he began to work on his Utopia and continued to do so on his return to England. Roper relates how More was withdrawn from his profession and brought to court. The King claimed as forfeiture a large ship belonging to the Pope which had been forced to put in at Southampton. In the discussion of the case Sir Thomas took the Pope's side and argued to such purpose that the decision was given in favour of the Sovereign Pontiff. The King thereupon called More to his service so pleased was he at his erudition (2:77).

More's first charge at court was the Mastership of Requests (2:166). Even after his later promotion he retained this office and found many opportunities of practicing his great virtue of charity. The first mention we have of Sir Thomas as privy Councillor is in 1518, July 26, in a letter of Erasmus (3:II.,4134). "Many learned men," he writes, "are now in the English court: Linacre the King's physician, Tunstall, Master of the Rolls; More, Privy Councillor; Pace, Secretary Mountjoy, Chamberlain; Colet, preacher; Stokesley, Confessor."

Henry VIII. was still the amiable prince of the first years of his accession and doubtless More's resignation to life at court was due to his affection for his sovereign. Sir Thomas was also a favourite with Queen Katherine who often invited him to dine with the King and herself and found great pleasure in his society (27:34). Sir Thomas More's head was not turned by this show of affection on the part of the King and his Consort. On one occasion when his son-in-law, Roper, congratulated him on his intimacy with the King, More replied (2:198): "I thank Our Lord, my son, I find His Grace my very good lord, indeed, and I believe he doth favour me singularly as any subject in the realm: howbeit, son Roper, I may tell thee I have no cause to be proud thereof; for if my head would win him a castle in France, it should not fail to go." More had no external reasons for such a remark but he knew his sovereign very well indeed, to have spoken thus during the early years of Henry's reign.

It was while he was at court that he gave his first public demonstration of his interest in and zeal for the New Learning by his letter to Oxford at the time of the "Trojans' revolt" against the innovation of Greek. Of course, he wrote in the King's name but from what we know of Sir Thomas More we can judge that he would write no more than what he himself believed to be right.

The years intervening between the date of this letter (1518) and 1529 when he was made Lord Chancellor saw him knighted in 1521; ambassador to Bruges and Calais in the same year; speaker of the House of Commons in 1523; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 1525; and from 1527-1529 again ambassador to France and Cambrai (2:466).

When Sir Thomas first took up his duties at court he compared himself to a man who not being trained to ride sits awkwardly in his saddle. Yet throughout this period the tact with which he accomplished his duties is exquisite, and the modesty with which he occupied his place at court beautiful.

"That More, combining the religious fervour and devotion of the recluse with the urbanity, grace and ready wit of the most cultivated man of the world, a considerate and patient master, a pattern of conjugal purity and fidelity should not seek to push his fortune among the unscrupulous candidates for royal favour, is no more than might be expected. He knew well what were the King's intentions at that time (1527) and did not approve of them. He knew also, how hard it was to contend with one whose arguments he could not admit without peril of his conscience, or contradict without peril of his life. His learning, his reputation, his legal acquirements, were sure to point him out to the King as the one man above all others whose judgment on the question none would venture to impugn, and few would be inclined to dispute. That judgment he had avoided giving with all the tact and dexterity of which he was master (3:IV.,216).

In 1529, Sir Thomas More was appointed Lord Chancellor. The battle was lost. It was impossible now to withdraw. Sooner or later, he must have known, his decision would be required. He knew what that decision would be and that disgrace lay at the end of the road.

On the nineteenth of October, 1529, Wolsey was deprived of the seal, having lost the royal favour because of his failure to secure the divorce. On the twenty-fifth of the same month Eustace Chapuys, writing to his master, Charles V., informed the emperor that the Royal Seal had been transferred to Sir Thomas More. "Everyone is delighted at his promotion, because he is an upright and learned man, and a good servant of the Queen (3:IV.6062)." "I do not congratulate More," writes his dear friend, Erasmus, "nor literature; but I do indeed congratulate England, for a better or a holier judge could not have been appointed (8: 1034)." Wolsey, himself, is said to have declared that no man was so fit for the office as Sir Thomas More (8:426). The most characteristic feature of More's chancellorship," says Dr. Walsh, "was his prompt disposing of

*The allusion is to the divorce.

cases. He realized very well that not only must justice be done but as far as possible it must be done promptly, and the tedious drawing out of cases to great length works injustice even though they are justly decided after many years. The Court of Chancery in England has become a byword for slowness of procedure and has been satirized on many occasions during the nineteenth century, but already in the sixteenth century there were many cases before the court that had been dragging on for twenty years, and even more..... The clearing up of the calendar of the Court of Chancery marked an epoch in English legal history, and is one of our best evidences of More's thoroughly practical character (32:234)."

Throughout the whole of Sir Thomas' chancellorship, which lasted from 1529 to 1532, Henry VIII. was busy about the divorce. It will be sufficient to allude to the insinuations of Cranmer which led the King finally to demand of the clergy their acknowledgment of him as head of the Church. The title was given to him with the clause--"so far as the law of Christ allows"--on February 11, 1531 (2:234). On the twentieth, Chapuys, who has been quoted above, wrote: "There is no one that does not blame this usurpation except those who have promoted it. The Chancellor is so mortified at it that he is anxious above all things to resign his office." (3:V.,171) Henry VIII. still retained him, hoping, doubtless to gain his consent which would have such weight throughout the Kingdom.

A year later, May 13, 1532, Chapuys again wrote, "Parliament is discussing the revocation of all synodal and other constitutions made by the English clergy, and the prohibition of holding synods without express licence of the King. This is a strange thing. Churchmen will be of less account than shoemakers who have the power of assembling and making their own statutes. The King also wishes bishops not to have the power to arrest persons accused of heresy. The Chancellor and the Bishops oppose him. He is very angry, especially with the Chancellor and the Bishop of Winchester, and is determined to carry the matter (3:V.,1013).*" Three days later More resigned the Royal Seal (2:466).*

When he laid down the Chancellorship, he advised his successor, Thomas Cromwell, thus: "Mr. Cromwell, you are now entered into the service of a most noble, wise and liberal prince; if you will follow my poor advice, you shall, in your counsel-giving to his Grace, ever tell him what he ought to do, but never what he is able to do; for if the lion knew his own strength, hard were it for any man to rule him (2:315)."

Cromwell ignored the advice until he himself at

*May 16, 1532.

last was devoured by the lion. When Crammer pronounced the divorce, Sir Thomas said to Roper: "God grant, son, that these matters within awhile be not confirmed with oaths (2:315)."

In 1533, Sir Thomas was requested to be present at the coronation of Anne Boleyn. Few expected that he could do aught but obey the summons. Yet he was absent from the ceremony. From that time on, Henry was bent on his ruin. He was brought first before four members of the Council on a charge of misprision of treason for which there were no proofs against him. Sir Thomas gained the day. This put the King in a passion but the Lords restrained him, advising him that the bill of attainder could have no chance if it included More.

But the day of the King's vengeance was not long delayed. More had feared that the day would come when the Pope's authority would be rejected and the rejection confirmed by oath. That day did come, and soon came another day when Sir Thomas was summoned to take the oath. This was Monday, the thirteenth of April, 1534. "It was a great crisis in English history, the first overt and total renunciation of the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff and separation from the rest of Christendom; for such in reality and in effect it was, though few realized at the time the full significance of their act (2:352)."

Sir Thomas, however, realized the full significance. He refused to take the oath (2:353). "...I answered unto them that my purpose was not to put any fault either in the Act or any man that made it, or in the oath or any man that sware it, nor to condemn the conscience of any other man, but as for myself, in good faith my conscience so moved me in the matter, that though I would not deny to swear to the succession yet unto that oath that there was offered me I could not swear without the jeoparding of my soul to perpetual damnation." More was kept for a few days in custody of the Abbot of Westminster and on Friday, 17th of April, he was sent to the Tower. He again refused the oath on the first of May following.

It was not the oath of succession, however, but the Act of Supremacy to which Sir Thomas owed his martyrdom (2:398). This was passed November 18, 1534. For a whole year Sir Thomas had lain in prison absolutely silent, ready to accept the will of God, but not eager to provoke persecution. His silent protest irritated the King, who determined to test his former beloved friend by the new Act. Sir Thomas could not be moved either by threat or persuasion. He was brought to trial, though already condemned (2:425). When asked what he could allege against the sentence, he replied that the supremacy in the Church could not belong to a layman that "it rightfully belonged to the See of Rome, as granted personally by Our Lord when on

earth to St. Peter and his successors (2:424).*

Courageous in spirit and strong in the Faith for which he gave his life, he went to the scaffold on Tower Hill, July 6, 1535, there to receive the blow that was to bring him the martyr's crown.

Sir Thomas More's Literary Work

After this glimpse of Sir Thomas More we can understand how his first literary work of value should have been the translation of the life of Pico della Mirandola. More was strangely like that "rare, learned, devout and graceful figure who moved with an unspoiled faith amid the luxuriant paganism of Lorenzo's court (37)." "O happy mind," writes Sir Thomas, "which none adversity might oppress, which no prosperity might enhance: not the cunning of all philosophy was able to make him proud, not the knowledge of the Hebrews, Chaldey and Arabic language, besides Greke and Laten could make him vainglorious, not his great substance, not his noble blood, coulde blow up his heart...., what thing was there of so marvellous strength that might overturn that mind of him (20:6)." The biographer might have been writing of himself. "Not the cunning of all philosophy," nor the intimate friendship of the King, nor the reputation he enjoyed "were able to make" Sir Thomas "proud," "What thing was there of so marvellous strength that might overturn that mind of him?" Not his affection for the King, not the fear of pain and suffering, not even the great love he had for his daughter, Margaret, could "overturn that mind of him."

To the translation of Pico's Twelve Properties or Conditions of a Lover Sir Thomas has added an explanatory verse upon each. On the first property he writes:

The first point is to love but one alone,
And for that one all other to forsake;
For whoso loveth many loveth none;
The flood that is in many channels take (en)
In each of them shall feeble stremes make.

And on the last:

Serve God for love then, not for hope of mede.
What service may so desirable be
As where all turneth to thine own spede.
Who is so good, so lovely eke as He,
Who hath all redy done so much for thee,
As He that first thee made, and on the rood
Hath thee redeemed with His precious Blood. (20:27-32)

Sir Thomas himself perfectly fulfilled these conditions of a lover, even the fourth and fifth, the most difficult of all; "To suffer all things though it were death, to be with his love;" and "to desire also to suffer shame and harm for his love, and to think that hurt sweet."

More is best known, however, by his Utopia. This

work was written in Latin probably during the few hours of leisure he had during his first embassy in Flanders (2:101). It was printed in Louvain in December, 1516 (2:101). Every subject that touches human existence is treated here. We must remember in reading it that Sir Thomas More had a lively sense of humor which he sometimes so disguised that even his intimate friends could not discern jest from earnest. "He hovers," says Mr. Brewer (3:II.,268), "so perpetually on the confines of jest and earnest, passes so naturally from one to the other that the reader is in constant suspense whether his jest be serious or his seriousness be jest."

He had a reason for this in the Utopia. There were many subjects to be discussed, the truth of which might not be too palatable to the King and some of the nobility. It would have been dangerous to discuss lawyers, European military and diplomatic tactics without some measure of absurdity. In the same way what he says of religion is spoken of natural religion. Though Sir Thomas speaks highly of the religious toleration in Utopia we cannot conclude that he thought one religion as good as another. In the first place, there was no question at the time of religious toleration in that sense, and secondly, he has shown by his death what the one true Faith meant to him. While in Utopia freedom of religious belief was permitted there was this exception: "Only Utopus made a solemn and severe law against such as should so far degenerate from the dignity of human nature as to think that our souls died with our bodies or that the world was governed by chance without a wise overruling Providence for they all formerly believed that there was a state of rewards and punishments to the good and bad after this life, and they now look on those that think otherwise as scarce fit to be counted men, since they degrade so noble a being as the soul and reckon it no better than a beast's; thus they are far from looking on such men as fit for human society or to be citizens of a well-ordered Commonwealth, since a man of such principles must need as oft as he dares do it, despise all their laws and customs; for there is no doubt to be made that a man who is afraid of nothing but the law and apprehends nothing after death will not scruple to break through all the laws of his country, either by fraud or force, when by this means he may satisfy his appetite."

Speaking of diplomacy he satirizes or rather mourns the duplicity of the day, a satire which applies as well to the twentieth century as to the sixteenth. "One proposes a league with the Venetians," he writes, "to be kept as long as he finds his account in it, and that he ought to communicate counsels with them and give them a share of the spoil till his success makes him need or fear them less and then it will be easily taken out of their hands."

Sir Thomas seems to have been acquainted with the

indicate also. "They invent and devise all means and manner of crafts - first, how to keep safely without fear of losing that they have unjustly gathered together and next how to hire and abuse the work and labour of the poor for as little money as may be. These devices, when the rich men have decreed to be kept and observed under color of the commonalty, that is to say, also of the poor people, then they be made laws.....therefore, when I consider and weigh in my mind all these commonwealths which nowadays anywhere do flourish, so God help me, I can perceive nothing but a certain conspiracy of rich men procuring their own commodities under the name and title of Commonwealth."

We have come to take the term "Utopian" to mean impossible. That Utopia is not an impossible state is proved by the fact that Sir Thomas practiced what he preached. But the world is not full of men like Sir Thomas.

Maurice Adams, in his introduction to the Camelot edition of "Utopia" says, (p.553) "Utopia was but the author's home writ large. His beautiful house on the Riverside at Chelsea, was, through his delights in social life and music and through the wit and merriment of his nature, a dwelling of joy and mirth as well as of study and thought.....Erasmus wrote of it, --- In More's house you would say that Plato's academy was revived again, only whereas in the academy the discussion turned upon geometry and the power of numbers, the house of Chelsea is a veritable school of Christian religion. In it is none, man or woman, but readeth or studieth the liberal art, yet is their chief care of piety. There is never any seen idle; the head of the house governs it, not only by a lofty carriage and oft rebukes, but by gentleness and amiable manners. Every member is busy in his place, performing his duty with alacrity; nor is sober mirth wanting.

It is in his more spiritual writings, however, that we catch brighter glimpses of that nobility of soul which was his. "If I mistake not," says Father Bridgett (2:385), "Blessed Thomas More stands quite alone among the ascetic writers of the Church; for while he is not inferior to the best ecclesiastics in his use of Holy Scripture, his knowledge of the human heart, his analysis of the workings of passion and the counter-workings of grace, he considered it his layman's privilege to use a livelier style and to illustrate his matter with abundance of merry stories." His humourous way of putting things adds rather than detracts from their value.

One of his earliest works, Novissima, a treatise on the four last things, remains unfinished. He began it to keep himself in mind of eternal things at the time when he was beginning to rise at court. The fragment that remains is on

death. "This short medicine," he says; i.e., the remembrance of the last things, "Is of a marvellous force, able to keep us all our life from sin. This medicine, though thou makest a sour face at it, is not so bitter as thou makest for. He bid-deth thee not take neither death, nor doom, not pain, but only to remember them and yet the joy of heaven therewith to temper them withal (20:71).

He returned to this idea twelve years later while he awaited death in the Tower. He comforted himself there by the thought that he was no more a prisoner in Beauchamp Tower than when living freely in the world. From this consideration came the Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation. Sir Thomas here lays aside his easy, flowing Latin and confines himself to English, for this work is a comfort for his own family and, perhaps out of consideration for his wife, he writes in a language she can understand.

As in the Utopia Sir Thomas once more cloaks his comments under a parable (2:394). The Dialogue takes place in the home of a certain Antony in the city of Buda. He is famed for his wisdom and piety and his advice and consolation are sought by his nephew, Vincent, a Hungarian noble. "The Hungarians were expecting an invasion of the Turks, and the choice between apostasy on the one hand, and death, imprisonment or at least exclusion from public life, and impoverishment on the other (2:394)." Sir Thomas had to veil his opinions in the Dialogue as well as in Utopia for plain-speaking would have brought him to the block long before July 6, 1535, though if the censors had not been too dense they must have penetrated his disguise. But the Dialogue of Comfort, if the Hungarians were understood to be Englishmen, and Vincent, the ex-Chancellor now languishing in the Tower, Henry VIII. would perforce be required to adopt as his role none other than the Turk. Perhaps, this is why it was passed unnoticed.

Sir Thomas is writing from a dungeon where he is awaiting death, yet his ever present humour never leaves him. The silver thread of laughter runs lightly through pages on which the shadow of the scaffold falls. When Vincent asks whether a man in tribulation may seek recreation, Antony replies, "Of truth, cousin, as you know very well myself am of nature even half giglot and more. I would I could as easily mend my fault as I can well know it; but scant can I refrain it, as old a fool as I am.....Howbeit, let such recreation serve us but for sauce, and make them not our meat, and let us pray unto God that we may feel such a savour in the delight of heaven, that in respect of the talking of the joys thereof all worldly recreation be but a grief to think on (21:II.,1). Nothing could dim his faith in God nor his vision of his Eternal Home. To him "the sayings of Our Saviour Christ were not a poet's

fable, nor a harper's song but the very holy word of Almighty God himself (21:III.,15). With bitterness toward none, he went forth to death for the Faith which his loyal nature would not shun. Though we condemn the hand that signed his death warrant we cannot regret the heroism of the noble-hearted man whose death opens the annals of the English Martyrs.

-----oO-----

Bibliography

1. d'Artaud, Chevalier; Lives and Times of the Roman Pontiffs.
2. Bridgett, Rev. T. E.; Life and Writings of Sir Thomas More.
3. Brewer, Gardiner and Brodie; Calendar of Letters and Papers.
4. DuPin; Bibliothèque Ecclésiastique.
5. Drane, A. T.; Christian Schools and Scholars.
6. Drane, A. T.; History of England.
7. Erasmus, Desiderius; Compendium Vitae Erasmi.
8. Erasmus, Desiderius; Works, Leyden Edition.
9. Einstein; Italian Renaissance in England.
10. Froude, J. A.; Oxford Lectures.
11. Fortescue, Sir John; De Laudibus Legum Angliae.
12. Gasquet, Cardinal; Eve of the Reformation.
13. Gasquet, Cardinal; Henry VIII and the English Monasteries.
14. Hallam; Works.
15. Janssen; History of the German People.
16. Jortin; Life of Erasmus (1808)
17. Knight; Life of Erasmus.
18. Lingard-Belloc; History of England.
19. Leach; English Schools at the Reformation.
20. More, Sir Thomas; English Works.
21. More, Sir Thomas; Dialogue of Comfort.
22. Marique, Pierre J.; History of Christian Education
23. Nisard; Etudes sur la Renaissance.
24. Nichols; Epistles of Erasmus.
25. Pater, Walter; The Renaissance.
26. Parson, Reuben, D. D.; Studies in Church History.
27. Strickland, Agnes; Queens of England.
28. Sichel, Edith; The Renaissance.
29. Stone, J. M.; The Reformation and the Renaissance.
30. Strype; Memorials of Cranmer.
31. Seebohm; Oxford Reformers.
32. Walsh, J. J.; Century of Columbus.
33. Woodward, W. H.; Desiderius Erasmus concerning the Aim and Method of Education
34. Woodward, W. H.; Studies in Education during the Renaissance.
35. Cambridge Modern History.
36. Catholic Encyclopedia.
37. Catholic World.

THESIS: ENGLISH SCHOLARS OF THE RENAISSANCE.

by Laura Backes.

This is an admirable paper, intelligent, conscientious, laborious, judicious. About the only criticism that occurs to me is that it isn't perfect, perhaps a little sketchy in spots, and with just a hint occasionally of "fine writing".

J. P. Noonan, S.J.

ENGLISH SCHOLARS OF THE RENAISSANCE

Laura Backes

This is a scholarly and entertainingly written paper. Produced as it was under extra-mural conditions, it may, I think, be accepted. Its shortcoming as a Master's thesis consists in the fact that it is a series of sketches rather than an attempt to solve a problem.

The school is lenient in not requiring the student to retype the MS. Innumerable letters are punched over instead of being erased and rewritten. The punctuation and capitalization are decidedly poor.

Austin G. Schmidt, S.J.