

Age of Ignorance.

(For the TORCH OF REASON.)

Paine's Age of Reason says that however backward they may be to acknowledge it, it is nevertheless a fact that the age of ignorance commenced with the introduction of the christian religion. The following extracts from standard works and cyclopedias confirm the truth of Thomas Paine's assertion of the ancient literature of the Hindoo's. Sir Wm. Jones, christian historian and Orientalist, says, "It was the most voluminous imaginable, absolutely inexhaustible, reminding him of infinity itself." "The Iliad of Homer written 900 years B. C.," wrote Johnson, "numbers 24000 verses: but the Mahabhawata of the Hindoos 400,000, and the Puranus, comprising only a portion of their religious books extend to 2,000,000 of verses." Ancient libraries, the oldest of which any record exists, was a collection of Babylonish books, about 650 B. C. A public library was founded at Athens by Hipparchus 526 B. C. The second library of great note was founded at Alexandria by Ptolemy Philadelphus 204 B. C. which was burnt 47 B. C. 400,000 volumes being destroyed. From the remains another library was formed consisting of 700,000 volumes which was "destroyed by a mob of fanatic christians A. D. 391." People's Cyclopedia vol. 1 page 59.

Thus we see that the early christians not only persecuted the sciences by burning the professors, but also destroyed all books containing any proofs derogatory to their new superstition, and there is no doubt in my mind that they have destroyed a large number of valuable works secretly. It is hardly possible to overrate the influence which the study of these ancient volumes would have had on the world's succeeding races of mankind, which have passed to the great beyond, during the intervening ages since these valuable works were destroyed. These ancient works of science and history which were originally read and studied by thousands, would now be food for millions, and would have enabled the gifted teachers, (had not the dark night of christian fanaticism, ignorance and superstition fallen like a pall over the intellects of men) to have placed the sciences, arts, education and morals, perhaps a thousand years forward of the present knowledge of such things. These books which have been destroyed by cruel fanaticisms would have transmitted to us the wisdom and learning of the departed sages of ancient times. In those precious works we would possess the constant companionship of their authors, we would have in those volumes the orators declaiming to us, the historian reciting, and the poets singing. With the

warrior we would live over again the struggles of the battle. With the traveler we would cross the ocean and explore unknown lands, unravel the mysteries of plant and animal life, and tread with happy mind and glowing heart the classic soil. With the philosopher, we would adjust anew the lamp and the crucible, and watch with breathless interest for the spark or the effervescence which is to confirm or overthrow the favorite theory. But alas, it was not to be! The demon of superstition obliterated those valuable books forever. The first academies were formed at Alexandria by Ptolemy Soter 314 B. C. This may not be relished by christian preachers, but it is true, nevertheless. The science of astronomy has led men to form grander conceptions of the boundless extent of the universe, and the unlimited forces pertaining to matter, than all other classes of study. But the church lost no time in persecuting this science, as well as its professors. The cruel and inhuman practice of burning at the stake was the playful pastime of ignorant priests for the crime of knowing anything about the starry dome of the universe.

To Pythagorus, Born 536 B. C. we are indebted for the discovery of the theorem in the first book of Euclid. He was the founder of mathematics, and also laid down the true theory of the planetary system, which was laid aside and forgotten through all the intervening ages of christian ignorance, until revived by Copernicus. Newton, Gregory and Kiel honor Pythagorus by claiming that he had a knowledge of the real position of the stars, and with having taught the true celestial system. It is impossible to say how far in advance we would stand today in relation to astronomy had it not been suppressed by the early christian church. The next character that illuminates the pages of history is Hipparchus, born 160 B. C. He discovered the precession of the equinoxes, calculated the eclipses, determined the main period of the planets revolution, invented the stereographical method of projection, catalogued the fixed stars and laid the foundation for a true science of astronomy. He also determined the first inequality of the moon and the equation of the centre. To him must also be attributed the establishment of the epicycles and eccentrics, a geometrical conception for the purpose of resolving the apparent motions of the heavenly bodies, on the principle of circular movements. Little if any advance was made in astronomy during the period of the dark ages. Christian ignorance and superstition combating it and murdering and burning its professors, until there appeared on the horizon of

fame the celebrated English philosopher, monk, and scholar, Roger Bacon, born in Somersetshire about 1214 A. D. Bacon, was inventor of spectacles, and the first to described the true theory of telescopes and microscopes. He foresaw the greatest of all inventions in practical astronomy, the measurement of angles by optical means. But for these discoveries, like all his predecessors he too was imprisoned by the church. I will now give a general review of inventions and discoveries by the ancients, with the names and dates of each. Algebra was discovered by Diophantus, a Greek writer in
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