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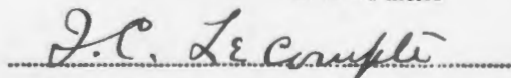
GRADUATE SCHOOL

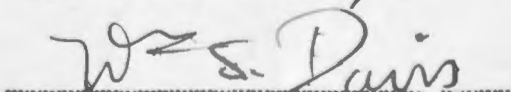
Report
of
Committee on Thesis

The undersigned, acting as a Committee of the Graduate School, have read the accompanying thesis submitted by Emily Atwater Babcock for the degree of Master of Arts.

They approve it as a thesis meeting the requirements of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.


Chairman





THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Report

of

Committee on Examination

This is to certify that we the undersigned, as a committee of the Graduate School, have given Emily Atwater Babcock final oral examination for the degree of Master of Arts . We recommend that the degree of Master of Arts be conferred upon the candidate.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

.....1920


.....
Chairman

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SOCIAL AND LITERARY ASPECTS OF GAUL
IN THE SIXTH CENTURY,
AS CHRONICLED BY GREGORY OF TOURS.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty
of the Graduate School of the
University of Minnesota.

by
Emily Atwater Babcock.

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Arts.

June, 1920.

Social and Literary Aspects of Gaul
in the Sixth Century as chronicled
by Gregory of Tours.
Chapter I.
Gallic Society.

The world of today is indebted for practically all information about conditions of life in Gaul during the sixth century A. D. to the works of one man, Gregory, Bishop of Tours. This Gallo-Roman, the scion of a long line of distinguished and noble ancestors, occupied a position which in those days was almost as important as that of the king,¹ and he has left not only a record of the political and ecclesiastical Gaul of his age, but has pictured, often in minute detail, the ordinary events and happenings of every day life. Interwoven with accounts of the wars and savage dealings of kings and dukes, the succession of bishops, affairs of the church, and miraculous powers of the saints, are vignettes which give us a keen appreciation of the weary and arduous life of the ordinary man, the lack of justice shown him, and even the trivial details of domestic life.

1. S. Gregorius Episcopus Turonensis, *Historia Francorum*, VI, 46. Text. Citations are to the *Patrologia Latina* Vol. LXXI, edited by J. P. Migne-Paris, 1879. Hereafter this work will be cited as H. F.

Again in contrast to this, Gregory shows us scenes from the courts of kings and the palaces of bishops, for he was a man who had exceptional opportunities to know all sorts and conditions of men, and in the belief that he is divinely directed to the task, he sets down his knowledge for the good of posterity, in his own simple and rustic manner.

There was a mixed population in Gaul at this time. It was composed of the conquering race, the semi-barbarous Franks, who were fast assimilating the civilization which they had found there, and the conquered Gallo-Romans so long under imperial domination that they thought of themselves as Romans. All classes were represented in this heterogeneous people.

Let us consider some of the facts that Gregory mentions concerning the lower classes. The Franks have now arrived at the stage of farming,² and while the very poor were housed in huts sometimes thatched with leaves,³ others of somewhat higher position had attained farmhouses of wood protected by enclosures of some kind. Near by were out buildings for the animals,⁴--cattle, sheep, pigs, and sometimes horses,-- while kitchen gardens afforded different kinds of vegetables, such as cabbages, onions and garlic.⁵ Various kinds of fruit, especially plums and grapes⁶ were cultivated. In the south there were olive groves.⁷ Bees and honey were staple farm products.

2. Kurth, Godfrey, *Les origines de la civilization moderne* p.51.
3. Gregorius, *De Gloria Beatorum Martyrum* XI.
4. " *Libe de Gloria Beatorum Confessorum* LXXXI.
5. " *Vitae Patrum* XIV.
6. " H. F. III, 15.
7. " H. F. IV, 43.

The people thus settled in permanent homes have learned something about methods of agriculture. They practise irrigation on a limited scale, leading water as needed, from springs through garden and field.⁸

But the practise of agriculture was subject to many drawbacks. The crops were liable to be destroyed by various disasters. Pests of locusts were common. In Auvergne and Limoges they were a serious menace, while across the mountains in Spain, they sometimes stripped the land to such an extent that not a tree or vineyard, not a grove or fruit of any kind, nothing remained green.⁹¹⁰

The lot of the peasant was rendered still harder by the insufferable arrogance of their over-lords, who at will turned their horses and cattle loose in the crops and vineyards of the poor. Protest was useless for it resulted only in the prompt murder of the farmer.¹¹

Again, the country was continually ravaged by the armed forces passing through it. Whether friendly or hostile the troops lived on the land, plundering and laying waste everywhere. "Such pillaging was done there (Bourges)", says Gregory, "as was never heard of in olden times, so that not a house remained, neither vineyard nor trees, but they cut down everything, they set fire to everything, and completely subdued it."¹²

8. Gregorius, De Gloria Martyrum, XXXVII.
 9. " H. F. IV, 20.
 10. " H. F. VI, 33.
 11. " H. F. VII, 22. Vitae Patrum, XVII, I.
 12. " H. F. VI, 31.

The devastation of King Childebert's army as it passed through Metz was such that it might have been thought that he was leading ¹³ any army against his own people. When his daughter Riguntha set out on her wedding journey to Spain, the sufferings of the people along the route were dreadful. "For they plundered the huts of the poor, they laid waste the vineyards, cutting down the vines and carrying them off with the grapes, driving away the flocks and whatever they could find besides, so that they ¹⁴ left nothing along their path".

Again and again famine ravished the land, attended by pestilence and the cattle plague. It is related that in the year 585, during such a time of stress, the people, reduced to the direst straits, tried to live on a kind of bread made from dried and powdered grape seeds, oat chaff and fern roots, together with a little flour. Others made use of straw and herbs with disastrous results. The traders, taking advantage of their necessity, preyed on them to such an extent that many were forced to sell themselves ¹⁵ into slavery to get food.

Little compassion was shown to the people when in trouble, unless the bishop chanced to lend some help. When famine visited Vienne, the common people were sent outside the city that there

13. H. F. X, 3.
14. H. F. VI, 45.
15. H. F. VII, 45.

might be more food for the ruling class.¹⁶ Gregory asserts that King Chelperic hated the cause of the poor and was always looking for new ways to injure them.¹⁷ The poor were not fed nor were the naked clothed.¹⁸ The maimed poor went about the country with beggars gaining a pittance by showing their deformities.¹⁹ The bishops apparently countenanced this practise for Bishop Nicetius gave a signed paper to one poor man that he might use it in begging. Even after Nicetius's death the thrifty mendicant employed it with good results, for people gladly gave him doles for a sight of the bishop's autograph.²⁰

Slaves had no redress from the cruelty of their masters, save as the bishops gave them protection. Gregory relates with righteous indignation the atrocities of a certain Rauching who forced his slaves while waiting at table to hold lighted candles against their bared legs. This same monster had two slaves who ventured to marry without his knowledge, buried alive.²¹ Even freedmen were liable to be reclaimed and forced under severe penalties to take up their former lot.

As an extreme example of arbitrary cruelty may be cited the case of the royal slaves who were forcibly torn from their homes and sent to a foreign land in the train of Princess Riguntha. "The king ordered many families of slaves to be carried

16. H. F. II, 33.

17. H. F. VI, 46.

18. H. F. VI, 6.

19. Gregorius, De Miraculis S. Martini, III, 58; III, 16.

20. Vitae Patrum, VIII, 9.

21. H. F. V, 3.

off from his property and placed upon wagons; many also who wept and were loath to go, he ordered to be thrust under guard that he might the more readily send them with his daughter. For they say that many hanged themselves because of this bitter trial, dreading to be separated from their relatives. But son was taken from father, mother from daughter, and with loud lamentations and curses they departed.^{22.}

In contrast to these scenes of squalor and suffering the opulence of the favored classes stands out more forcibly. Gregory recounts the luxuries of the age, and like the prophets of old scathingly rebukes them. " In your homes luxuries are more than abundant, in the store houses wine, wheat, and oil overflow, in the treasuries gold and silver are heaped up. One thing alone you lack, for not having peace, you are without the favor of God".²³

The princess before mentioned carried with her as a dowry fifty wagon loads of gold, silver and ornaments. The treasure of Mummolus, the patrician amounted to two hundred and fifty talents of silver and more than thirty of gold.²⁴

Allusion has been made to the fact that the bishops at times, commiserated the wretched lot of the people, and as their protectors,²⁵ held out an occasional helping hand.

22. H. F. VI, 45.

23. H. F. V, Prologue.

24. H. F. VII, 40.

25. Des Francs, I, B. Etudes sur Grégoire de Tours ou de la civilization en France au VI^e siècle. p, 30.

In the sixth century the clergy occupied first rank in the great triumvirate of power made up of royalty, the aristocracy and the episcopate.²⁶ Prisoners appealed to them from unjust judges, and the sympathy of the bishop seems to have been in general on the side of the criminal. They rebuked kings and dared to refuse communion to royal sinners. German of Paris said to King Sigebert, "If you depart without purposing in your heart to kill your brother, you shall return alive, a conqueror, but if otherwise, you shall die."²⁷ Bishop Praetextatus of Rouen denounced the terrible Fredegunda herself, saying with his dying breath,²⁸ "God will avenge me."

The bishop of Tours lacked none of the courage of his peers. "Listen, all ye in power", he cries, "So clothe some that ye do not despoil others, Add to your own riches that which will not inflict loss upon the church. For God is a swift avenger of his own. And therefore I admonish those in power who read this that they be not angry. For if any man is wroth, he acknowledges that the reproof is for him."²⁹

Again he warns Roccoenus, who is about to violate the right of refuge in the church that if he persists in his purpose,³⁰ neither he nor his king will be prosperous hereafter.

26. Lavissee, Ernest, Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la révolution. Vol. II, part I., page. 222.
 27. H. F. IV, 51.
 28. H. F. VIII, 31.
 29. S. Mart I, XXIX.
 30. H. F. V, 4.

To Fredegunda who tries to bribe him at the trial of Praetextatus, he replies, "If you gave me 1000 lbs. of gold and silver, could I do otherwise than as the Lord commands?"³¹

One explanation of the great power of the episcopate in the sixth century lies in the fact that with few exceptions, the bishops came from the great senatorial families, and the office was regarded as almost a hereditary right.³² But simony was now creeping in, as Gregory notes: "At that time (circa 527) the evil seed had begun to bear fruit, namely, the priestly office was either sold by kings or bought by the clergy."³³ Many presents were offered to secure it,³⁴ nevertheless, King Lothair in confirming the choice of a bishop, considers the family of the candidate an important asset, as in the case of the immediate predecessor of Gregory, Eufronius. When told that he was a grandson of the blessed Gregory, the king answered, "This is a family of the first rank and importance. Let the will of God and of Saint Martin be done."³⁵

There were good and bad bishops. We have records of many noble, high minded men who performed the duties of their high office as lowly servants of the Most High. Such a one was Desideratus of Verdun, of whom it is said, that poor himself, he borrowed of King Theodobertus seven thousand gold pieces to relieve

32. Des Francs, p.37.

31. H. F. VIII, 31.

33. Vitae Patrum, VI, 3.

34. H. F. III, 2.. H. F. VI, 39., Des Francs, p.37.

35. H. F. IV, 15.

the poor and destitute, promising to repay it later when business was reestablished.³⁶

Bishops gave asylum at the shrines and churches, to political prisoners, they strove against paganism, they built churches, they acted as ambassadors for kings, they assisted at councils, they were, in general, the most enlightened and best educated men of the day.³⁷ Gregory praises their courage, holiness, and virtue, but he does not shrink from scourging the evil men who have crept into the fold in sheep's clothing. There were those like Bishop Cautinus of Clermont, who was guilty of every crime. "In him there was no sanctity, nothing to be revered. He was absolutely lacking in all knowledge of letters, both ecclesiastical and secular."³⁸ The bishops of Saintes and Le Mans openly reproach each other with adulteries, fornications and perjuries. The social conscience seems to have been somewhat aroused at this, for while "many laughed at this, others whose intuition was sharper, mourned that weeds of the devil should spring up in such manner among the priests of the Lord."³⁹

Chilperic who hated nothing more than the churches, charged its heads as being severally, light minded, arrogant, opulent, wanton, proud or puffed up in spirit. He even asserts that they are the real rulers instead of the king.^{40.}

Although the bishops as a class, represented the best element in the sixth century Gaul, they were as completely in the

36. H. F. III, 34.

37. Des Francs, p.48.

38. H. F. IV, 11 and 12.

39. H. F. VIII, 7.

40. H. F. VI, 46.

thralldom of superstition as men of lesser calibre. Indeed their great influence with their generation came in part from the supernatural power with which they were invested in the minds of that people. The cult of the saints, especially that of Martin of Tours, was one of the most important factors of the age, and the clergy were their living representatives, endowed with mystic power. The shrine of the saint at Tours was visited by people from all over the land, and there was implicit belief in his miraculous powers. The sick came as to the temple of Aesculapius⁴¹ of old, and took up their abode in the atrium or near by, waiting for the divine healing. One can but marvel at the credulity of a man like Gregory who doubtless represents the highest intelligence of the time. His writings are honey-combed with accounts of wondrous cures, of deliverance from threatened perils. He carries the paternal bag of holy relics with him on journeys and gravely credits his own deliverance from robbers and from shipwreck to the protection of the blessed saint. The following incident occurred while he was on his way to visit his mother in Burgundy. He was just coming out of the woods when a band of robbers met him. "They surrounded us and wanted to spoil and kill us. Then I fled to my accustomed refuge and besought the aid of St. Martin. He deigned to help me at once and so terrified them that they could do nothing against us.....and fled." Mindful of the admonition of the Apostle, Gregory ordered that food and drink be given them, but they retreated as fast as they could,^{42.} waiting for nothing.

41. H. F. VIII, 16.

42. S. Mart, I, 36.

Many are the cures performed on himself or on his immediate family by the intervention of St Martin. The forces of nature are for him evil powers which fear the miraculous efficacy emanating from the Saint's tomb.⁴³ Wax from the lights ever burning there is placed on a tree which year after year has been injured by hail. "After that day even to the present, never did the tempest fall there, but when it came it passed over that place as if fearing it."⁴⁴ A man is attacked by a swarm of flies and becomes insane.⁴⁵ Gregory sees in this a trick of the evil one, nor has he any doubt that phantoms really attack human beings.⁴⁶

Kings visited the shrine hoping to learn future events. Chilperic desired certain information, so he sent a letter to the sepulchre and begged that St Martin would answer it. The letter and paper for the reply were placed on the tomb, but in vain, for no answer was vouchsafed.⁴⁷ Prince Merovech tried a similar appeal. He placed three books on the sepulchre, the Psalms, Kings, and the Gospels, in the hope that St Martin would graciously show him whether he would obtain the kingdom from his father. Three days of prayer, fasting and vigils however brought no favorable response.⁴⁸

Since the superior classes displayed so credulous an attitude toward superstition, although under the guise of religious devotion, doubtless the people were more deeply imbued with the same

43. Brehaut, Ernest, History of the Franks, Introduction pp.

XXIV, XXV

44. S. Mart, I, XXXIV.

45. H. F. X, 25.

46. S. Mart. III, 37.

47. H. F. V, 14.

48. H. F. V, 14.

spirit, for as Kurth remarks, under the vaneer of Christianity, they were still savages, and had preserved many of the rites of their old religion. ⁴⁹ "Do not, O men, do not call upon them, for these are not gods, but demons", says the holy man, when in peril of shipwreck, his fellow travellers were calling on the heathen Gods, Jove, Mercury, Minerva, and Venus. ⁵⁰ There is evidence that Diana was still worshipped in the vicinity of Trèves, about the time of Gregory, for he himself talked with a monk who had converted the people from her worship. "I found here an image of Diana which this unbelieving people worshipped as a god", said the old deacon Vulpic, "but I preached continually to the crowds who flocked in from the country round about, that Diana was nothing, that the idol was nothing, and her worship nothing. Let them rather offer to omnipotent God the sacrifice of prayer". The people zealous in their new faith tried in vain to tear down the great idol. It finally yielded to prayer and fell crashing to the ground, where it was reduced to powder by iron hammers. ⁵¹ The mention of smaller images which were easily broken suggests that the worshippers of Diana in that vicinity were many.

In earlier times, it was customary in the neighborhood of Autun to bless the fields and vineyards by carrying about them an image of Berecyntha. ⁵² Gregory also tells of certain rites

49. Kurth, G. Les origines de la civilization moderne.

50. Vitae Patrum, XVII, 5.

51. H. F. VIII, 15.

52. De Gloria Confessorum, LXXVII.

which took place yearly at Mt. Helanus. Crowds flocked there, and threw as libations into the great lake, garments, fleeces, shapes of cheese and wax, or bread, each according to his own means. "They came with wagons, bearing food and drink, they slaughtered animals, and feasted for three days."⁵³ At Cologne, also, there was a heathen shrine where libations were offered, and here those who had been healed placed as votive gifts, images carved in wood of the limbs restored.⁵⁴ Afterwards, they indulged in orgies of feasting and drinking. St. Gallus, Gregory's distinguished uncle, burned this fane and was nearly killed by the indignant worshippers.

Mention is also made of a great shrine near Trèves where images of Mars and Mercury upon a lofty column were worshipped by many.⁵⁵

Another phase of the prevalent credulity is seen in the tendency of all classes to consult soothsayers and practitioners of the black arts. Gregory's own family was not free from the imputation of sorcery, for his brother, Peter the deacon, was accused of causing the death of a bishop by evil arts.⁵⁶ A favorite method of learning future events was to consult a woman having a spirit of divination. Thus Gunthram Boso consulted such a Pytho-ness concerning Merovechs's chances of success, and received a favorable and flattering response, which was soon proved to be wholly false.⁵⁷

53. De Gloria Confessorum, II.

54. Vitae Patrum, VI, 2.

55. Gregorius, De Miraculis S. Juliani, C. V.

56. H. F. V, 5.

57. H. F. V, 14.

Women of this class were apparently slaves and earned a good profit for their masters, taking in large sums of gold and silver. They sometimes bought their freedom out of their gains, and sported such rich garments that the awe-struck people regarded them as divine.⁵⁸

The clergy felt that these practises were inspired by the evil one, and were strong in denunciation of them, especially when applied, as they very commonly were, to the treatment of the sick.

Healers of this sort were liable to be tortured as witches and executed with dreadful cruelty.⁵⁹ Gregory remarks that there were many who practised these impostures and led the people astray, and he notes that when he is not at home the people rush in crowds to be deceived by these quacks.⁶⁰ He describes some of their methods. Besides using verbal incantations, they employed herbs in many ways, using them in bandages as applications and internally for potions.⁶¹ Ointments also are mentioned. In the case of Mummulus the prefect, accused of causing the death of a young prince, by sorcery, a drink made of herbs plays an important part. The witches arraigned with him confess that they offered up the life of the boy for that of Mummulus.⁶²

Several false prophets appeared at this time who pretended to heal through relics of the saints. One such arrived from

58. H. F. VII, 44.

59. H. F. VI, 35.

60. H. F. IX, 6.

61. S. Mart. IV, 36. S. Mart. I, 26.

62. H. F. VI, 35.

Spain bearing a cross from which hung flasks which he said contained holy oil. In a great bag he carried alleged relics of saints. This when opened disclosed roots of various kinds, moles' teeth, bones of mice mingled with bears' claws and fat, the professional equipment of a sorcerer.⁶³

The great respect paid to portents and natural phenomena must not be forgotten. In common with all medieval writers Gregory believed that the world was fast approaching the end;⁶⁴ hence signs and wonders in the heavens above and in the world below had profound significance for him. He devotes much consideration to them. He records⁶⁵ that during the plague of 582, there were rains accompanied by thunder and lightening, in January. Flowers bloomed on the trees, and a wonderful comet with rays like the smoke of a great fire appeared. At Paris blood fell from the sky on the clothes of people, and was even found within houses. Again in the same year, at Tours⁶⁶ blood flowed from broken bread. There was an eclipse of the moon and fire were seen to run through the heavens. The wall of Soissons fell and there was an earthquake at Angers. While at Paris he saw a wonderful sign in the heavens,⁶⁷ which he believed portended the death of Merovech.

It can be readily understood therefore, in view of the dense ignorance of the masses, and of the all-pervading superstition, that the legitimate practise of medicine was in very low repute.

63. H. F. IX, 6.

64. H. F. I, Prologue.

65. H. F. VI, 14.

66. H. F. VI, 21.

67. H. F. V, 19.

There was little opportunity for physicians when kings and queens had despotic power over them as slaves and when the most distinguished bishop of the day warned not only against sorcerers and legerdermain but against doctors. "Let this case teach every Christian that when he merits heavenly healing, he needs no earthly help", says Gregory, referring to a case where cupping glasses had been used.⁶⁸ Physicians there were, especially in the king's palace,--and very skillful ones according to Fredegunda's statement,⁶⁹ as Marileifus,⁷⁰ chief physician to King Chilperic. Nothing is said of his training or fitness for the position, but the fact that his father was a miller and that other relatives occupied the humble positions of cooks and bakers in the palace is thrown against him as a reproach.

Queen Austrechild, on the point of death, in savage pagan spirit "desired to have participants in her death, so that at her obsequies, others might be mourned also. "I still had a chance of life", she tells the king, "if I had not perished in the hands of wicked physicians, for the draughts which they gave me have violently taken away my life and have made me quickly lose this light." In accordance with her request the two doctors were executed, and Gregory's only comment is: "Many sensible people think that this was not done without sin."⁷¹

- 68. H. F. V, 6.
- 69. H. F. VIII, 31.
- 70. H. F. VII, 25.
- 71. H. F. V, 36.

Gregory's own infallible remedy is dust from the tomb of St. Martin, mixed with a little water and taken as a draught.⁷² On one occasion, when sick unto death, he called the physician and said to him, "You have exhausted all the skill of your profession, you have tried all the powers of ointments, but worldly remedies avail the dying not at all. One thing remains to be done. I will show you a great specific."⁷³ This of course is the magic drink which brings relief at once.

Gregory mentions many diseases with which his countrymen were afflicted. Among others may be noted leprosy, which was so prevalent in Gaul that there was a special building provided for those thus afflicted, in the suburbs of Chalon-sur-Saône.⁷⁴ Bubonic plague raged frequently, the seeds of the disease being often brought by merchant ships from Spain along with their wares.⁷⁵ Since to the medieval mind, disease was a visitation of supernatural agencies, it must be cured by spiritual means.⁷⁶ Gregory relates in some detail the methods by which Grinthram combated the plague at a time when it was particularly virulent at Marseilles. "The King to provide remedies so that the people might heal the scars of sin, commanded all the people to come to the church where Rogations were held with the utmost consecration. He also ordered that only barley bread and pure water should be used and that all should watch and pray continually." By these means the

72. S. Mart., II, 1.

73. S. Mart., I, 27.

74. De Gloria Conf., LXXXVI.

75. H. F. IX, 22.

76. Brehaut, Int., p. XXII.

king gained such fame that he was looked on as a healer with miraculous powers. The people tore off the fringe of his robe, steeped it in water, and administered the drink as an effective remedy. Gregory naively remarks that he does not doubt this, for he has himself heard those possessed of demons invoking the name of Gunthram.⁷⁷

Physicians made frequent use of cupping glasses, especially in diseases of the eye; also of fomentations. Collyria⁷⁸-eye salve⁷⁹ was another remedy for eye trouble, and plasters of cantarides were used for pustules.

Mention is made several times of blindness as caused by clouds of dust,⁸⁰ the inference being that it is the work of the evil spirits in nature. A somewhat detailed account of the treatment for cataract⁸¹ by means of cauterizing, affords an opportunity of comparing sixth century methods with those of today. On the whole, Gregory's account of disease and its treatment suggests much that is interesting as to the lack of medical and sanitary conditions in his own time, while it must be remembered that to his mind, the healing power of the saint was the only effectual help for disease of every kind.

Gregory has little to say about the busy world of trade and commerce, although he mentions incidentally several trades, and we get glimpses here and there that indicate how some of the

77. H. F. IX, 21.
 78. H. F. VI, 40.
 79. H. F. VI, 15.
 80. S. Mart., IV, 17 & 18.
 " " ., III, 16 & 20.
 81. " " ., II., 19.

people, at least, earned their daily bread. Millers, bakers, cooks, weavers, workers in wool, carpenters, dealers in food supplies,--a salt merchant at Metz--even the artist who engraved passages of scripture on the walls and ceilings of oratories,⁸² appear in his pages, as well as retainers and menials attached to the palace.

Kurth remarks that commerce had to get along as best it could without protection or guaranty.⁸³ Traders were for the most part Jews or Syrians or the half-merchant, half-pirate Bretons.⁸⁴ Marseilles was the great port for the Eastern trade. Traders came from Spain with goods, and also from Egypt, bringing from the latter country, paper,⁸⁵ and a certain food made of the roots of Egyptian herbs, much used by hermits.⁸⁶

Occasionally as at Verdun a group of merchants became rich through trade.⁸⁷ They occupied houses in the square where they displayed their costly goods,--gold and silver ornaments.⁸⁸ Merchants also offered their wares in the court yards of churches, especially on feast days when great crowds assembled. Gregory tells a lively story of a girl who was caught stealing from one of these traders.⁸⁹

Passing to the consideration of public morality in Gaul during this century, we find a certain recluse of Nice inveighing against the people for their sins, both ecclesiastical and secular. "For there is no one with understanding, no one who seeks God, no one who does good by which the anger of God may

82. H. F. VII, 36.

83. Kurth, p. 90.

84. H. F. III. "

85. H. F. V, 5.

86. H. F. VI, 6.

87. H. F. III, 34.

88. H. F. VI, 32.

89. De Glor. Mart, I, 58.

be turned away. For all the people are unbelievers, they are given over to perjuries, they steal and are quick to kill, and from them no fruit of justice springs.⁹⁰

King Gunthram in like strain cries, "Not only do we not fear the Lord, but we even lay waste his holy places, and we kill his ministers. The entire people have fallen into wickedness, and every man delights to do those things which are evil."⁹¹ An apt illustration of the truth of these accusations is found in the accounts of what happened at Agen and Toulouse. The residents of the former town had placed their treasure in the church of St. Vincent, hoping that the Christian army would not violate the sacred place. In vain, for the troops burned the doors which they could not unlock, and carried off everything even to the sacred vessels.⁹²

Bishop Magnulfus of Toulouse who dared to withstand the pretender Gundovald was felled by a blow on the ear, beaten, kicked, bound with chains, his goods confiscated, and he himself sent into exile.⁹³

Feuds to the death raged between towns.⁹⁴ "The men of Orleans joining with those of Blois attacked the people of Chateaudun, and taking them by surprize defeated them. Houses and supplies together with all that could not easily be carried off, they

90. H. F. VI, 6.

91. H. F. VIII, 30.

92. H. F. VII, 35.

93. H. F. VII, 27.

94. Kurth, p. 88.

burned; they stole the flocks and made way with whatever they could remove."⁹⁵ Then the population of Chateaudun retaliated in like fashion, and so it went on, until matters were finally settled by an agreement between the counts of ^{the} rival towns.

Family feuds were waged by assassination until none remained on either side. The savage Queen Fredegunda stamped out one such quarrel in summary fashion. "When only one was left from both sides who lacked a slayer, the relatives took up the quarrel and were finally invited by the queen to a banquet with a view to reconciliation. But when she could not unite them by soft words, she quieted both parties with the axe. "That is, she had them slain at the festive board by her henchmen."⁹⁶ The ancient code which demanded that a man should avenge the death of his kinsman by slaying the murderer was still in force. The barbarian instincts of the half-civilized Frank craved more than death alone. A certain Chramsind to avenge a kinsman, slew the murderer who was dining with him, stripped the garments from the lifeless body and hung it on a picket fence. He then mounted his horse and threw himself on the mercy of the king.⁹⁷ Occasionally a judge would resent this summary justice. Gregory tells the following incident. In an uprising one man was killed by another. Later he met justice at the hands of his victim's brother. The judge of that place, learning of the deed, ordered that he be

95. H. F. VII, 2 .

96. H. F. X, 27.

97. H. F. IX, 19.

bound and cast into prison, saying, "This rascal ought to die, who by his own will, not waiting for trial, dared rashly to avenge the death of his brother."⁹⁸

Des Francs says that paganism reigned in the hearts of kings and directed the conduct of the great⁹⁹ and it is only necessary to scan the pages of Gregory to realize this truth. The punishments dealt out to offenders are almost too dreadful to relate. Queen Fredegunda sent a messenger to kill Brunhilda. When he failed in the attempt, the angry queen had his hands and feet cut off.¹⁰⁰ Septiminia and Droctuf who had charge of the king's children were detected in a plot against the queen. Their punishment was mild. The woman was branded on the face and sent to the mill to grind corn for daily use, while Droctuf lost his ears and his hair and was put to work in the vineyards.¹⁰¹ Horrible scourgings, the rack, the horse, and the wheel were freely used, while fiendish ingenuity was displayed in devising methods of execution. Royal parents seemed to have no bowels of pity toward wayward sons. One king shut up his son with his wife and children in a poor man's hut, then burned it to the ground over them.¹⁰² Another royal family was thrown into a well.¹⁰³ King Sigismund passively allowed his son to be strangled by his step mother.¹⁰⁴ Burning at the stake was meted out to adulterers¹⁰⁵ and to others.

98. Vit. Patrum, VIII, 7.
 99. Des Francs, p. 60, 61, 62.
 100. H. F. VII, 20.
 101. H. F. IX, 38.
 102. H. F. IV, 20.
 103. H. F. III, 6.
 104. H. F. III, 5.
 105. H. F. VI, 36.

It is recorded of the aimable Fredegunda that she had her men-at-arms carry poisoned knives, that there might be no doubt of the result of wounds.¹⁰⁶

The wicked bishop Cautinus desiring to get possession of a certain property, ordered its owner to be buried alive in the tomb of another. Almost miraculously the wretched man succeeded in freeing himself and fled to the king who righted him.¹⁰⁷

The trial by ordeal common to medieval times is often alluded to in Gregory's writings. The use of the ring thrown either into boiling water or into the flames was much in vogue; also the ordeal by water. The following incident of trial by battle occurred in the reign of King Gunthram the Good. "While the king was himself following the hunt through the Vosges Forest, he discovered signs that a buffalo had been killed". The deed was traced to the king's chamberlain and a trial by battle was ordered. "Then the chamberlain presented his nephew to take up battle on his behalf and both were present on the field. The boy threw his lance against the keeper of the forest and pierced his foot so that he soon fell over backward. Then the lad drawing the sword which hung from his girdle tried to cut the throat of his worsted foe, but was himself stabbed in the belly by the knife of the wounded man and both fell dead".¹⁰⁸

The sacred rights of ambassadors were not always respected by the primitive-minded kings of the Franks. Although it was Frankish custom that those who bore the consecrated twigs should be

106. H. F. VIII, 29.

107. H. F. IV, 12.

108. H. F. X, 10.

untouched, yet they were sometimes seized and tortured, while on one occasion King Childbert, exasperated at their message, drove them from the city ordering that the foul offscourings of the city be poured upon their heads.¹⁰⁹

The Frankish kings undertook few public works of general utility.¹¹⁰ It is said of King Gunthram that he built churches and founded monasteries, and at one time the Jews even hoped in vain that he would rebuild their synagogue at Orleans which the Christians had destroyed.¹¹¹ King Chilperic built circuses at Soissons and at Paris and offered games to the people.¹¹² The aqueducts were under the special charge of an artisan,¹¹³ but apparently no care was taken to keep bridges in repair, for in Paris itself, a fugitive trying to escape stepped between two planks of the city bridge, broke his leg, and thus was caught.¹¹⁴

From these scenes of oppression and cruelty where might made right and each man's hand was raised against his brother, let us turn to another characteristic aspect of the age. Many there were who left the world and devoted themselves to a quiet life of prayer and meditation. In his lives of the saints, Gregory relates many stories of abbots and bishops who led this simple life of poverty in monasteries and other secluded places. Women as well as men adopted this mode of life and gave themselves up to good works. Thus it is said that Queen Clotilda after the death of Clovis came to Tours and served at the church of St.

109. H. F. VII, 32; VII, 14.

110. Des Francs, p. 62.

111. H. F. VIII, 1.

112. H. F. V, 18.

113. H. F. II, 33.

114. H. F. VI, 36.

Martin, and dwelt there with the greatest chastity and kindness all the days of her life.¹¹⁵ She was always diligent in alms, she bestowed estates on churches, monasteries, and holy places wherever she saw there was need, serving God not as a queen but as his own handmaid.¹¹⁶ Radegunda, once the wife of Clothar I, founded a monastery at Poitiers and became abbess there.¹¹⁷ In this monastery, there was an example of the spirit of asceticism which carried to the extreme becomes fanaticism. A young nun of her own will chose to be immured for life. "The nuns gathered with lighted lamps, singing psalms and while Radegunda held her hand, she was led to the place. And so bidding farewell to all and kissing each one she was shut in. The door by which she had entered was closed up, and there she is yet devoted to prayer and reading."¹¹⁸ This is but one of the many instances which Gregory notes in his writings.

Yet it was probably in the monasteries and in the schools connected with them that the seeds of intellectual life, though dormant were kept alive during the dark days of the sixth century, and having cursorily examined some of the elements that went to make up the life of that period, let us now consider the character of the current literature and education, and study the life, education and works of Gregory of Tours as the representative man of his time.

115. H. F. II, 43.

116. H. F. III, 18.

117. H. F. III, 7.

118. H. F. VI, 29.

Chapter II.

Gregory of Tours, the Man of the Age.

Through the troublesome, semi-barbarian twilight of the latter half of the sixth century, moves the strong and forceful figure of the good bishop of Tours, touching with illuminating pen events of every nature, whether secular or ecclesiastical, in Gaul. The "Herodotus of the barbarians"¹ was a dominant figure in all that concerned his church and country, fearless in rebuking kings, ready to lend his aid at councils, acting as ambassador on important missions, and as peace maker in monastic troubles, and at all seasons and places chanting the miraculous powers of St. Martin of Tours. Born in fertile Auvergne which King Childebert yearned to see with his own eyes,² he passed his early life at Clermont, near which his father owned a large estate. Occasionally in passing Gregory describes picturesque scenes from this pleasant rural life, especially at the time of harvest.³

Through both parents he came of distinguished stock, but from his father Florentius,⁴ son of the senator Georgius, he traced descent from Vectius Epagatus,⁵ one of the martyrs of the early church at Lyons. It is evident that Gregory felt great pride in this particular forefather whom he mentions four times in the course of his works. In this connection he relates a story⁶ probably tradi-

1. Ampère, J, J, Histoire littéraire de la France avant la douzième siècle. Int.
2. H. F. III, 9.
3. De Gloria Mart. LXXXIV.
4. Vitae Patrum, XIV.
5. H. F. I, 31.
6. H. F. I, 29.

tional in his family, of Leocadius the first senator of Gaul. Of Gallo-Roman birth, this man while yet a pagan, offered his own house in the city of Bourges for Christian worship. He was afterwards converted and transformed his house into a church, which "is now the first church in the city of Bourges", writes Gregory, "built with marvellous skill and made famous by the relics of Stephen the first martyr." From Leocadius, his paternal grandmother Leocadia descended.

But Armentaria his mother could boast of a lineage not less eminent and likewise of senatorial rank, Moreover she was the granddaughter of the blessed Gregory, bishop of Langres, whose claims to distinction even kings acknowledged,⁷ while her uncle Duke Gundulf was attached to King Childebert's service.⁸

Gregory's immediate family included a brother, Peter the deacon,⁹ and a sister the wife of a certain Justinus.¹⁰ In addition there were two nieces, Eusthenia¹¹ and Justina, the latter probably a prioress in Radegunda's monastery at Poitiers.¹²

But Gregory inherited not only wealth and worldly position. A far more important claim to distinction lay in the fact that the episcopal office was almost hereditary in his line. "With the exception of five bishops", he writes, "all the rest who have held the office at Tours have been connected with my family".¹³ He

7. H. F. IV, 15.

8. H. F. VI, 11.

9. H. F. V, 5.

10. S. Mart., II, 2.

11. S. Mart., IV, 36.

12. H. F. X, 15.

13. H. F. V, 50.

might have added bishops of other cities too, for Gallus¹⁴ his father's brother was bishop of Clermont, the famous Nicetius his grand-uncle was bishop of Lyons,¹⁵ and another grand-uncle Tetricus held the episcopal chair at Langres.

Gregory has an easy and familiar way of taking the reader into his confidence in regard to the intimate details of life, and it is to the facts gleaned from his own writings that we owe most of our information about his life. He mentions that he was born on the fest day of St. Andrea¹⁶ (Nov. 30) whom together with St. Julian, he took as his patron saints. The year of his birth is not certain; it was either 538 or 539.

His father probably died early, as he disappears from the story after a few references. As a young man recently married, Florentius was making preparations for a long journey, in anticipation of being sent with other young men of Auvergne as a hostage to Theodebert's court.¹⁷ The sacred relics given him at that time were preserved in the family for years, and Gregory relates with what wonderful results they were used. The task of bringing up the young Georgius--who later assumed the name of his grandfather, bishop Gregory--devolved upon his mother Armentaria, for whom her son always had the highest admiration. It was at her suggestion and admonition that he undertook some of his writings,¹⁸ and although he refers to woman as the inferior sex,¹⁹ he must have made an exception in the case of his mother, whose merit, he confesses, is much greater than his own.²⁰

15. H. F. V, 5.

14. S. Juliani, XXXIII.

16. S. Andrea, XXXVIII.

17. De Gloria Mart. XLXXXIV.

18. S. Mart. I. Prologue.

19. Vitae Patrum, XIX.

20. De Gloria Mart., LXXXVI.

He learned to read when eight years old,²¹ probably using the Scriptures as his text book, and was later instructed by his uncle Bishop Gallus, and by Avitus,²² the former's successor upon the episcopal throne of Auvergne. He seems to have been much in the company of the latter, attending him on walks, and on pilgrimages to the shrines of saints and the cells of hermits,²³ and in sickness ministering to him as a beloved disciple.²⁴

While yet a lad he was visited by a serious illness followed by a miraculous cure which led him to vow that he would become a cleric.²⁵ Doubtless his natural inclination toward the ecclesiastical life was increased by the influence of Bishop Gallus who visited him often at that time, and who loved him, as he says, "with unique affection"²⁶

In due time he became a deacon,²⁷ and on the death of Eufronius was chosen bishop of Tours in his place.²⁸ He was consecrated at Rheims by Aegidius, in the twelfth year of King Sigibert, 573.²⁹

This prince of the church, in the midst of his busy life, and despite a profound lack of confidence in his own ability wrote and left for those who should follow him several works of far-reaching importance. As he brings to a close his History of

21. Vitae Patrum, VIII, 2.
22. " " , II. Prologue.
23. " " , XI, 2.
24. S. Mart., III, 60.
25. Vitae Patrum, II, 2.
26. Vitae Patrum, II, 2.
27. S. Mart. I, 35.
28. H. F. X, 31, 19.
29. S. Mart. II, I.

the Franks, he draws up a summary of his life work.³⁰ He names the books that he has written, and in an impressive manner commends them to the care of posterity. "I wrote ten books of Histories, seven of Miracles, one of the Lives of the Fathers". I composed one book of commentaries on the Psalms, and one book also on the Services of the Church. And although I have written these books in a style somewhat uncouth, yet I adjure all priests of the Lord who after me shall rule the humble church at Tours, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the day of judgment dreaded by all sinners, that if you would not be confounded, and depart condemned with the devil from that judgment, you never cause these books to be destroyed or re-written, choosing some passages and passing over others, but allow them all to remain intact and unimpaired in your time, just as I left them. Still if anything in this book pleases you, I do not forbid you to put it into verse if only my work be left uninjured. I have finished these books in the twenty-first year after my ordination".

In addition to the works here mentioned, Gregory refers elsewhere to a Latin translation of The Passion of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. This he says he made with the assistance of a certain Syrian.³¹ He also speaks of a book which he wrote on the Masses composed by Sidonius (Apollinaris), poet and bishop.³² This work is no longer extant.

30. H. F. X, 31, 19.

32. H. F. II, 22.

31. De Gloria Mart. XCV.

The literary remains of this unique writer may be roughly classified under the two heads, History and Hagiography, to which must be added the fragment of the Commentary on the Psalms, and the interesting work on the Church Services; or as the fuller title reads, An Account of the Courses of the Stars as they should be observed in performing the Services.³³ The History of the Franks stands in the first rank as source material for early French history.³⁴ It was in process of composition ~~in~~ about twenty years. The first four books which bring the account down to the death of King Sigibert in 575 were written about 576. The fifth and sixth books appear to have been composed between 580 and 584 or 585, and the story ends with the scathing obituary on Chilperic, who died in 584. Books seven to ten close the chronicle and came out between the years 587 and 591. Gregory then revised the first six books and made some additions.³⁵

The hagiographical works are not written on the same high plane as the chronicles. Their appeal was to a different audience, less cultured and less critical. They were for the edification of the faithful and to advertize the shrine of St. Martin,³⁶ yet the modern historian finds them very valuable for the light thrown upon the manners and customs of the times, and Bonnet goes so far as to say that the Lives of the Fathers deserve to be placed by the side of the History of the Franks as source material.³⁷

33. See note at end of this chapter.

34. Manitius, Max. Geschichte der Lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters. Erster Theil: Von Justinian bis zur Mitte des Zehnten Jahrhunderts. p. 221.

35. Manitius, p. 220; Omont et Collon, Grégoire de Tours, Histoire des Francs. Int. p. XII.

36. Bonnet, Max. Le Latin de Grégoire de Tours, Int. P. 2; Brehaut, Ernest. Int. p. 16.

37. Bonnet, P. 9.

These are practically monographs, twenty in number--of noted saints of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, many of whom are of historical significance. .

The book on the Church Services, while of very slight interest from a literary standpoint, contains some valuable hints on the scope of Gregory's education and general information. It shows, according to Manitius, that after all, Gregory had what were for the times, really remarkable acquirements, which he employed in the service of the Church, insomuch that he was really in certain limited fields an instructor of the clergy. In this little treatise on astronomy he shows that he has a genuine interest in science and is thoroughly familiar with the subject,³⁸ as well as with the writings of several Latin poets less well known.

There is a decided difference of opinion among authorities as to Gregory's education. Some critics claim that he was highly educated classically³⁹ and he was certainly able to define clearly the seven arts taught by Martian Capella,⁴⁰ but Roger believes that his acquaintance with Latin authors was practically confined to Vergil, that he knew Aulus Gellius and Pliny the Elder probably only by name and may have come in contact with Latin literature only late in life after his language and style was formed.⁴¹ Gregory

38. Manitius, pp. 221, 222.

39. Roger, M. L'Enseignement des lettres classiques d'Ausone à Alcuin, p. 107.

40. H. F. A. 31. Martianus Capella was a learned grammarian of Madaura in Africa, in the second half of the fifth century; his work *Septimum* treats of the liberal arts. Harper's Latin Dictionary.

41. Roger, p. 107.

states clearly that he was not trained in the art of grammar nor instructed in the polished writings of secular authors, but that his blessed father Avitus influenced him wholly toward ecclesiastical works.⁴² This must be taken with some reservations however, for his writings afford evidence of some familiarity with the works of several Latin writers, especially with Virgil.⁴³ He also quotes Sallust⁴⁴ and speaks of the Theodosian code.⁴⁵ Kurth offers the suggestion⁴⁶ that he may have acquired a slight knowledge of Virgil and other Latin writers through some collection of Latin literature used in the schools, but Bonnet⁴⁷ refutes this hypothesis with the remark that such a chrestomathie would hardly have excluded such authors as Cicero and Caesar. Gregory mentions the name of the great orator only once. Indeed he seems to fear the possible evil influence of secular writers, as in this connection where he remarks, "Jerome says that he was severely beaten because he delighted in the subtleties of Cicero."⁴⁸ Again he says: "For we ought not to relate their fallacious stories, nor to follow after the wisdom of philosophers inimical to God, lest by the judgment of God we fall into sentence of eternal death." Whereupon he proceeds to show that he is quite familiar with pagan mythology, nearly all of which, however, can be clearly traced to Virgil.⁴⁹

42. Vitae Patrum, II.

43. Kurth, St. Grégoire de Tours et les études classiques au VI^e Siècle. (Revue des Questions historiques, XXIV, p. 590)

44. H. F. IV. 13; H. F. VII. 1.

45. H. F. IV. 47.

46. Kurth, St. Grégoire, p. 591.

47. Bonnet, p. 52.

48. Libri Miraculorum, Prooemium.

49. " " " .

Manilius⁵⁰ regards it as very unlikely that a man of such eminence in the church, the intimate friend of the poet Fortunatus, should have remained so ignorant, for certainly opportunities for familiarizing himself with classical literature must have often presented themselves. It is possible that Gregory's own modesty may have caused him to depreciate his literary acquirements. He begs students of Martian Capella as those of superior attainments, to be lenient with his shortcomings. "And, priest of God, whoever you be, if our Martian has instructed you in the seven disciplines, namely, if he has taught you to read by means of grammar, to apprehend arguments in disputations by dialectics, to recognize various metres by rhetoric, by astronomy to grasp the measures of lands and lines, by astrology to contemplate the paths of the heavenly bodies, by arithmetic to understand the parts of numbers, by harmony to accord the modulations of the voice to the pleasant accents of verse; if in all these things you have been so trained, that my style seems to you rustic, still I beg that you will not cast forth what I have written".⁵¹

Thus he seems to regard Andarcus,⁵² who was well trained in the works of Virgil, in the books of the Theodosian code, and in the art of computation, as highly educated. Yet while he constantly deplores his own lack of education, and apologizes overmuch for his

50. Manilius, p. 218.

51. H. F. X. 31, 19.

52. H. F. IV. 47.

rude style, he is comforted by the conviction that his language because unpolished by the schools may be more intelligible to the people. In conversation with his mother on the advisability⁵³ of writing a work on the miracles of St. Martin, he says: "Do you not realize that I am ignorant of letters, and shall I, simple and uneducated as I am, venture to make known these wonderful miracles? Would that Severus,⁵⁴ would that Paulinus⁵⁵ were living, or that Fortunatus,⁵⁶ at least, were here to describe them! For I am so untrained that I shall incur reproach if I try to write down these things. And she said to me, 'Do you not know that with us, because of the intellectual condition of the people, if one speaks as you do, he is felt to be more easily understood? So do not hesitate or refrain from this work, for you will be doing⁵⁷ wrong if you hold your peace on these matters!'"

Again and again he protests that his tongue is sterile, his speech rude and unpolished, and he fears that because of his uncouth language his pages may lose their value.⁵⁸

He states in specific terms, not once but several times, just where the weakness in his education lies. On the very threshold⁵⁴ of his history, he turns aside to warn his audience what to ex-

53. This took place in a vision.

54. Severus Sulpicius, a bishop in Gaul, author of a *Historia Sacra*, the *Vita S. Martini*, and several smaller works. He died 422 A. D. Harper's Latin Dictionary.

55. Paulinus, probably Paulinus of Nola, a Christian writer of the fifth century A. D. Harper's Latin Dictionary.

56. Fortunatus, Venantius, an Italian poet living in Gaul in the sixth century. A. D. Harper's Latin Dictionary.

57. *Epistola in Quatuor Libros de Virtutibus Sancti Martini Episcopi*.

58. *Vitae Patrum VIII; IX; S. Mart. II. 3.*

fact.⁵⁹ "But first I beg the indulgence of my readers if either in letters or in syllables I transgress the art of grammar, in which I am not fully trained." Again, in even more detail, he says:⁶⁰

"But I fear lest when I begin to write, because I am untrained in rhetoric, and in the art of grammar, someone may say to me, 'Do you think that by an undertaking so rude and untrained your name will attain a place among writers? Or do you think that this work which lacks the aid of art and any acquaintance with letters will be received by learned men? You who have no cleverness in composition; who are not even acquainted with grammatical terms; who too often use feminine words instead of masculine, neuters instead of feminines and masculines for neuters; you who often misplace even the prepositions as sanctioned by the authority of distinguished writers. For you use the accusative in place of the ablative, and again the ablative instead of the accusative.... You possibly cannot be regarded among other writers."

He begs for indulgence because of his high motive in writing. No one else can be found sufficiently trained to write the annals of the Franks.⁶¹ "Neither help of art, nor eloquence of language assists me... no wordly vain glory spurs me to write, but modesty urges me to be silent, while the love and fear of Christ impell me to write."⁶²

59. H. F. I. Prologue.

60. De Gloria Conf. Praefatio.

61. H. F. Praefatio.

62. De Gloria Conf. Praefatio.

He fears criticism from those trained in writing. "One⁶³ versed in composition could expand this a good deal", he says, and goes on to explain that it is his sole desire as one concerned with churchly doctrines, to weave together in succinct and simple language, without verbosity the history which pertains to the upbuilding of the Church, in such a manner that he may show forth the miraculous power of the blessed Saint and not offend the good⁶⁴ taste of his readers.

From these examples it seems fair to infer with Roger⁶⁵ that Gregory was quite aware of the deficiencies of his education and was speaking in all sincerity quite without ecclesiastical cant, in his many protestations. Indeed the perusal of his pages affords the best evidence of the very defects which he so constantly bemoans.

Gregory may have been ignorant of classical literature, but as regards the works of later writers, especially historians, he was better read. As sources for the earlier portions of the History of the Franks, he used the chronicles of Jerome, Orosius, Victorius, and Sulpicius Severus; the church history of Eusebius-Rufinus; the life of St. Martin by Sulpicius Severus; the letters of Ferreolus and of his fellow citizen, Sidonius Apollinaris; and the writings of Bishop Avitus. He also had access to histories not otherwise known, those of Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus and Sulpicius Alexander, from which he quotes at some length in the

63. De Gloria Conf., Praefatio.

64. S. Mart. II, 19.

65. Roger, p. 105.

second book of his history as authorities on the early Franks.

Maritius thinks it very possible that Gregory made use of these letter sources elsewhere in his history. In addition, he used the Annals of Arles, Angers, and Burgundy, and V. Arndt believed that he also had access to the annals of Auvergne and Poitiers as well as to the West Gothic Annals. It is also probably that he made use of material from the early Sagas of the Franks.⁶⁶

He quotes several times from the Christian poet Prudentius,⁶⁷ and refers to a letter of St. Paulinus,⁶⁸ possibly of Nola.

His intimacy with Fortunatus has been mentioned. This Italian poet residing in Gaul addressed thirty three poems to him,--also one to his mother Armentaria. In one of these he declares that Gregory not only read divine poems but also composed them.⁶⁹ Fortunatus had written a life of St. Martin in verse and Gregory writes, "Induced by his example, I although unskilled, will try to tell somewhat of the miracles of St. Martin; to reproduce from memory as far as I am able those which took place after his death, and by aid in writing this will be to give that which is not found in the works of Severus or Paulinus."⁷⁰ It appears from a letter of Fortunatus to Gregory that there was some plan under consideration between the two, by which Fortunatus was to turn Gregory's prose life of St. Martin into verse,⁷¹ which would indicate that the bishop-

66. Maritius, p. 280.

67. *Vitae Patrum* VI; *De Gloria Mart.* XLII; XLIII; CVI.

68. *H. S.* II, 13.

69. Maritius, p. 218. Fortunatus, *Carm.* 5, 56.

70. *S. Mart.* I, 2.

71. Maritius, p. 218. Fortunatus, *op. poetica*, ed. Leo, p. 293.

op did not, after all, write Latin verse.

In regard to his qualifications for writing the history of the Franks, however, there can be but one opinion: The importance of his family, his close relations with the rulers of the several kingdoms in Gaul, together with his position as bishop of the importances at Tournai afforded him ample opportunity to obtain full and accurate information on contemporary events.⁷² In many of these he personally took part, which makes the latter part of the history particularly valuable. He traveled much about the country. We hear of his now at Lyons and Vienna, now at Paris, again at Chalon-sur-Saône, often on church business or visiting shrines of the saints, but quite as often despatched by the king to act as ambassador on important diplomatic affairs. Thus while visiting King Childbert at Metz he was sent on an embassy to King Gunthram at Chalon-sur-Saône to negotiate a settlement between the two kings over disputed territory. He is received with great courtesy, and after the audience, is invited to a dinner which "was as abundant in courses as it was rich in good cheer."⁷³ When Gunthram arrives, in the course of a royal progress, at the City of Orleans, Gregory is one of the guests at the state banquet. Later he is sought out at his lodging by the King who there partakes of "the holy bread of St. Martin" at the bishop's invitation.⁷⁴

72. See Brechtel, Introduction.

73. H. P. IX, 20. Brechtel.

74. H. P. VIII, 1, 2.

75

He visits Fortiers at the behest of Childebert to sit on the case of the forty rebellious nuns who, led by Princess Chrochild, had departed in a body from the monastery founded by Radegunda.⁷⁵ It was here that his niece Justine held the position of prioress.⁷⁶ Apparently Gregory never visited Rome or went outside Gaul, although the life written by Abbot Odo in the tenth century mentions that he went to Rome while Gregory the Great was pope.⁷⁷

A very prolific source of information was afforded by the political prisoners who from time to time sought asylum at the Church of St. Martin, as well as by the throngs of pilgrims from all parts of Gaul who sought healing at his shrine.⁷⁸ Brehaut comments on the fact that Gregory was informed, albeit incorrectly, about affairs in the East, as is shown by his remarks on the death of Emperor Justinian and on the character of his successor. Envoys were sent to Constantinople by the Frankish kings at this time.⁷⁹

Reports concerning all the latest events at Rome were brought by one of Gregory's deacons, who visited at the Eternal City on a quest for relics. He tells of portents and plagues, and also of the flooding of the Tiber which destroyed ancient temples and storehouses full of wheat. He was an eye witness of the events which took place when Gregory the Great was elected pope and witnessed his ordination. In describing him the deacon from primitive Gaul

75. H. F. X, 15.

76. Bonnat, p. 2.

77. See Manitius, p. 217. G. Monod, a.s. O.S. 25 refutes the claim that Odo of Cluny wrote this life which is not authoritative. See Vita, ch. 24 Migne, p. 128.

78. Brehaut, p. 2 67.

79. H. F. IV, 40.

mentions that Gregory was so versed in grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric, that he was believed to be second to no one in the City. He relates how Gregory was taken from his hiding place and made head of the Church of God, against his own will.⁸⁰

To the best of his ability Gregory used great care as to sources. For the geography and wonders of distant lands he was obliged to rely on the accounts of travelers who brought back truly wondrous tales. Thus he describes the Pyramids as situated upon the river Nile, in the City of Babylonia (not the famous Babylon) and calls them the granaries of Joseph. "They are wide at the base and narrow at the top, so that the grain could be poured in through a small hole". He remarks that many stories are told in connection with the crossing of the Red Sea but he purposes to insert in his pages only those facts which he knows to be true, since he has learned them from wise men, and above all, from those who have been to the place. "For they say that the furrows made by the wheels of the chariot remain to this day, and are visible in the depths of the sea as far as the eye can follow."⁸¹

In relating miracles he is also very careful, "All the things we have told," he says on one occasion, "we either learned through his relating them (a recluse)⁸² or we saw with our own eyes". He endeavored to investigate thoroughly the miracles that took place at the tomb of St. Martin.⁸³ "The facts that I relate ought not to seem to anyone unworthy of belief, because the names of individuals are

80. H. F. X, 1, 2.

81. H. F. I, 10.

82. Vitae Patrum, XI.

83. S. Mart., III, 45.

not mentioned in the account. The reason for it is this: when they are restored to health by the saint of God they leave immediately, and they sometimes go so secretly that, so to speak, they are noticed by no one. And when the report has spread that a miracle has been done by the blessed bishop, I summon those who have charge of the church and inquire into what has happened, but I do not always learn the names from them. I generally mention by name those I have been able to see or examine personally."⁸⁴

Gregory appears to have been of a careful and somewhat conservative nature. He begins his history by reciting his creed and declaring his allegiance to the Catholic Church, that there may be no doubt on these points in the minds of his readers.⁸⁵ He is careful to observe the canons of the church, as in the case of the young man who desired to be consecrated bishop without going through the *cursus honorum*.⁸⁶ He personally investigates charges against his clergy.⁸⁷ He celebrates Easter on the twenty second of the month rather than on the fifteenth as so many in Gaul do, for after making a careful investigation he finds that the "springs of Spain, which are flooded by power from above, are full at our Easter".⁸⁸ He desires at all costs to keep the peace among the citizens of his city, even offering church money to settle a feud which promised to assume serious proportions.⁸⁹

84. Brehaut's translation.

85. H. F. I. Prologus.

86. H. F. VI, 15.

87. S. Mart., III, 38.

88. H. F. X, 23.

89. H. F. VII, 47.

Yet he defies King Childebert in the matter of his right to impose taxes on the people of Tours, and gains immunity for them, out of respect to St. Martin.⁹⁰ He refutes King Chilperic's theological views and roundly rebukes him for departing from the accepted tenets of the church on the Trinity.⁹¹ He takes up the cudgels for the disgraced bishop Praetextatus against the council of bishops and in open opposition to the king and queen.⁹² When accused of slandering the queen by Leudastes the low-born count of unsavory reputation, he ably defends himself, but contrary to the canons, is obliged to make expiation at three altars.⁹³

His attitude toward defenders of the faith is in accordance with the ideas of the age, although not consistent with our more enlightened ethical standards. Of Clovis, author of dreadful crimes against humanity, who bargained with the Lord for victory as the price of adopting Christianity, he says: "From day to day God prostrated his enemies under his hand, and increased his kingdom, because he walked with righteous heart before him and did the things which were pleasing in his eyes."⁹⁴

Whether Gregory hated the French kings as conquerors of Gaul and believed that their rule would be short as Des Francs asserts,⁹⁵ or whether that view is entirely false, as Bonnet declares,⁹⁶ is immaterial here. It is enough that he has shown them to us as he saw them with all their faults, and occasional good deeds. His pen pic-

90. H. F. IX, 30.

91. H. F. V, 44.

92. H. F. V, 16.

93. H. F. V, 49.

94. H. F. II, 40.

95. Des Francs, p. 10; p. 104ff.

96. Bonnet, p. 6.

ture of Chilperic is painted in blackest colors, "the Nero and the Herod of our times. Never did he love any man truly, and he was beloved by no one; and so when he breathed forth his spirit all his followers left him. But when he was dead, one faithful priest came and washed him and clothed him in better garments, and having passed the night in singing hymns, put him upon a boat, and buried him in the church of St. Vincent which is at Paris.⁹⁷ A dreadful end which somehow brings to mind Carlyle's picture of the death of that later French King Louis XV, "forsaken, a mass of abhorred clay, abandoned to some poor persons, and priests."⁹⁸

Gregory ends his history with an account of what he himself regards as the important acts of his life. Besides recounting his literary works, he says: "I, Gregory although unworthy was the nineteenth (bishop), and I found the church at Tours, in which the blessed Martin and the other priests of the Lord were consecrated to the office of bishop wrecked by fire and in ruins. This I rebuilt, more extensive in width and with a higher roof, and I dedicated it in the seventeenth year of my ordination. Here, as I found from some aged priests, had been placed by those of olden time, the relics of the blessed Maurice and his companions. For I found in the treasury of the Church of St. Martin the very box, in which were the relics in very bad condition..... I found the church of the holy Perpetuus burned and I ordered our workmen to restore it to its wonted splendor either by painting or otherwise adorning it. I ordered a baptistery to be built adjoining the church in which I placed the relics of St. John and

97. N. P. VI, 46.

98. Carlyle, Thomas, The French Revolution, I, ch. 4. p. 30.

of Sergius the martyr, and in the earlier baptistery, I put the
relics of the martyred St. Benignus. And in many places within
the boundaries of Tours I dedicated churches and oratories and
adorned them with the relics of holy men..... 99

Here ends in the name of Christ the tenth book of the
100
Histories.

99. H. F. X. 31, 19.

100. Text of the Brussels and Corbie manuscripts.

Note P.31: Liber de cursibus ecclesiasticis. Gregory claims this as one of his works in H.F.10,31. It was discovered by Fr. Haase in 1853 and then published for the first time. The purpose of the work was twofold. Gregory wished to give to the clergy a reliable help for the celebration of the night offices, by fixing the times of the constellations. He also had an educational end in view.

The first part described the wonders of the ancient world: Noah's Ark, Babylon, Solomon's Temple, the Mausoleum (?), the Colossus of Rhodes, the Theater of Heraklea, the Pharos at Alexandria. With these works of men Gregory contrasts seven others which God created: The ebb and flow of the tides, the growth of plants, the phoenix. -- "the third is that which Lactantius tells of the phoenix." --- Gregory gives here a short paraphrase of the poem of De Phœnice, which he ascribes to Lactantius). Then comes Aetna with a short description from Virgil's Aeneid, 3, 570-574 (" of which Publius of Mantua speaks as follows in the third book of the Ineid,") and what is more important a quotation from the Chorography of the rather unknown Julius Titianus: " the well known Julius Titianus speaks of the mountain in these words: "There are four great mountains in Sicily; Ericus, Nebrodes, Neptune and Ethna, (the latter) is often seen to belch forth flames from the top and the world perceives that also with the eye of faith, although when it was first announced at Rome that Ethna was burning, it was received as a prodigy."

Then follows a short description of the hot springs of St Barthélemy near Grenoble, to which Gregory adds four lines of a poem by Hilary of Arles. As sixth and seventh wonders Gregory

gives the courses of the sun and the phases of the moon. Then he goes on to speak of the stars and so to his real subject where he explains that he does not use the heathen appellations of the stars "employing only those names which our common people give from their usage, and which the arrangement of the signs themselves express, as cross, sickle and the other signs."-----"but how the services in praise of God may be performed in a rational manner, I instruct you, and at what hours one who desires to be diligently engaged in that duty must rise at night and pray to the Lord."

Condensed from Manilius, P.222.

Chapter III.

Intellectual Life.

"Since liberal culture is declining, nay perishing in the cities of Gaul-----and no grammarian trained in the art of dialectics could be found able to depict these matters, either in prose or verse; and since many oftentimes bewailed this fact, saying, 'Alas for our age, because the cultivation of literature has passed away from us, nor is any found among the people who can set forth upon the pages of history the events of the times; I ever hearing these and other like murmurings, could not, although I am rude of speech, refrain from telling the strife of the wicked and the life of the good, in order to preserve past history, so that it may come to the notice of later generations. And I have been stimulated and influenced in this matter, because as I have been surprized to learn from men of our day, although few comprehend the subtle speech of the rhetorician, yet many understand one who speaks with uncultured tongue.'"

With these words Gregory begins his history, thus characterizing the intellectual status of his fellow countrymen, as it appeared to him. We have seen in the preceding chapter that he felt keenly his own lack of literary training, yet according to this statement he believed himself to be the man best fitted for undertaking so important a work as a national history.

Gaul had indeed degenerated intellectually. There was a time and that not long past, when classical studies flourished

there,² and when men like Ausonius³ in the fourth century and Sidonius Apollinaris⁴ in the fifth century lent renown to that remote land. At Autun, Trèves, Toulouse, Marseilles and especially at Bordeaux there were famous schools which followed in general the system of Quintillian⁵, teaching the child to read and write, and to speak correctly.⁶ A knowledge of the poets was a part of the instruction, also music and geometry. This was the elementary training afforded by the schools of grammar. The student then passed to the rhetorician who taught him the art of oratory, civil law and history.

In the fifth century, this education was fast tending toward artificiality and sterility. Sidonius Apollinaris, whom Gregory frequently mentions in his history, was educated at Bordeaux, and was so trained in the specious rhetoric of the day, that he sacrificed all natural spontaneity in his writings.⁸ Could there be a greater contrast than is afforded by this highly cultured product of the fifth century in Gaul, and the unlettered Gregory, type of the highest intellectual culture of a century later? The down-

2. Bonnet, p. 81.

3. A celebrated rhetorician and poet of Gaul who lived and taught at Bordeaux and Trèves, in the second half of the fourth century A. D. He ranks as almost the last Latin poet, and as the first French poet, Mackail, J. W. Latin Literature, pp. 265, 266.

4. Sidonius Apollinaris, Man of the World, poet and writer of the fifth century. Born at Lyons, about 431, A. D., he became bishop of Auvergne and died about 489. Dalton, Int.

5. Quintillian the famous rhetorician was born in Spain and educated at Rome. His celebrated work, *Institutio Oratoria* became the standard treatise on Roman oratory. He died 95, A. D. Mackail, p. 198.

6. Roger, p. 7.

7. " p. 9.

8. Dalton, O. W. Letters of Sidonius, Introduction, p. CXXII.

ward trend had been so rapid that as Gregory says, in his time classical culture had almost disappeared.

In the centuries past there had been both municipal and private schools in Gaul, the latter taught by celebrated rhetoricians whose fame drew pupils from afar.⁹ In the sixth century the schools appear to have been principally those connected with the bishop's palace and the monasteries. Still there must have been some schools of rhetoric still in existence, for Gregory speaks of the subtleties of the rhetoricians, comparing his own speech with theirs.¹⁰ He also mentions with deference those trained by Martian Capella,¹¹ "who probably represented to him the highest degree of literary training."¹²

In the story of Andarcus, we get an insight into the studies taught the children of the upper classes. This young slave, following the ancient Roman fashion, acted as pedagogue or school attendant to the son of his master, the senator Felix. In this way he had the opportunity of acquiring an education himself, and became noted for his learning. "For he was fully instructed in the works of Virgil, in the books of the Theodosian laws, and in the science of arithmetic." He became so puffed up by reason of his brilliant attainments that he looked down upon his master. Finally King Sigibert took notice of him, and advanced him in his service, but his arrogance led to his speedy downfall and death.¹³ This incident not only affords a glimpse of the classical school

9. Ampère, JJ, *Histoire littéraire de la France avant le douzième siècle*, Vol. II, p. 276.

10. H. F. Praefatio.

11. H. F. X, 31.

12. Roger, p. 110.

13. H. F. IV, 47.

of the time, but shows also that it was not impossible for the lowest slave to obtain an education.

It seems evident also that a teacher was a rara avis and difficult to secure, and much was forgiven morally for the sake of teaching ability. There was a certain cleric of most dissolute character who was sentenced for his sins to be sold as a slave. Bishop Wetherius happened to hear of the case, and sympathizing as bishops so often did with the criminal,¹⁴ he redeemed him for twenty gold pieces. "Then after his life had been granted him, he professed to be a teacher of letters, promising the bishop that if he would intrust boys to him, he would send them back instructed in letters. Delighted at the news, the bishop got the boys of the city together and sent them to him to be taught. And then while he was enjoying high honor at the hands of the townsmen, and the bishop had very generously given him land and vineyards, and while he was constantly invited to the homes of the parents of the pupils"..... he fell back into evil ways. Yet the bishop with a gentle reproof, restored him to honor.¹⁵ Probably this man even if his professions were true, could teach only the merest rudiments of letters, yet the bishop desired to keep him at all costs.

By this time the great public and municipal schools of Roman times seem to have disappeared and the palace schools instituted by Charlemagne were not as yet. We meet, however, with some references to the "schola". Thus a deaf and dumb boy whose faculties were restored at the tomb of St. Martin, was proteged

14. S. Mart., III, 53.

15. H. P. VI, 36.

by Queen Clotilda, and placed at school where he committed all the Psalms to memory.¹⁶ Again Aredius as a young man was sent by his parents to the court of Theodobert. There he was noticed by Bishop Nicetius who induced him to leave the palace and follow him. He corrected and trained him, and instructed him in the divine books.¹⁷ So it seems that both at the court and in the bishop's palace there was some kind of a preparatory training for life. This cannot, however, be interpreted as a school affording a classical education. The school for noble's sons at the palace trained them for the duties of their station. They were probably drilled there in physical exercise, morals, and in the elements of letters.¹⁸ Roger says that it is useless to understand a bureaucracy trained in letters at a palace school in rude Merovingian times.¹⁹ To read, write, calculate and spell, to be familiar with laws and formulas was sufficient even for those who filled the offices of notaries and secretaries.²⁰

So also there appear to have been in the bishop's house, and at monasteries, training schools for boys who were to follow the church as a career. They learned there the chanting and reading necessary for the holy offices. "Schola" in this sense therefore meant the group of young clerics, readers, and singers who surrounded the bishop, a kind of seminary.²¹ Gregory tells of a mother who brought her only son to the abbot to be instructed, that he might become a priest, trained in the sacred duties. "But

16. S. Mart. I, 7.

17. H. F. X, 29.

18. Des Francs, p. 62.

19. Roger, p. 95.

20. Roger, p. 96.

21. Ampère, Vol. II, p. 278.

When he had already been instructed in spiritual writings, and was singing psalms with the rest of the priests in the choir of singers"....., he suddenly fell dead.²² St. Leobardus a recluse near Tours, in his youth" was sent at the proper time to school with the other boys. There he committed to memory some of the Psalms, and though unwitting that he was to be a priest, was already innocently preparing for the service of the Lord".²³

The venerable deacon Vulfilatic from whom Gregory obtained source material about the heathen worship around Treves, disclosed also a bit of information about his own education, which seems to have been little more than the ability to read and write. "When I grew older", he says, I longed to learn letters, but I was able to write before I knew the order of the written letters."²⁴

Bishop Nicetius of Lyons took care that all boys born in his house should be taught their letters and instructed in the Psalms as soon as they began to talk. He felt responsible for their moral training.²⁵ The arch deacon John of Nîmes, a very religious man, had a fervent desire to teach the children in his own diocese.²⁶ Bishop Patroclus when a young man, retired from the world, built an oratory which he consecrated with relics of St. Martin, and there began to instruct boys in the pursuit of letters.²⁷ This priest had an interesting early history. When

22. De Gloria Mart., LXXVI.

23. Vitae Patrum, XX. 1.

24. H. P. VIII, XV.

25. Vitae Patrum, VIII, 2.

26. De Gloria Mart., LXXVIII.

27. Vitae Patrum, IX, 2.

ten years old he was sent to herd the sheep, while his more fortunate brother Antony was destined for the pursuit of letters. Though not of noble family, the brothers were free-born. On a certain mid day they met to break bread together, one coming from school and the other from the care of his father's flock; and Antony said to his brother: "Go farther off, you rustic fellow; for it is your work to feed sheep, and mine to be trained in letters. Hence the task itself ennobles me, while the drudgery of that watchcare makes you base. But when the other heard that, regarding the rebuke as if sent to him by God, he left the sheep in the field, and with eager impulse making all speed, he sought out the school of the boys. And having learned his letters, he mastered whatever was essential for boys so quickly, through the aid of his memory, that he surpassed his brother both in knowledge and enthusiasm.²⁸ His intelligence commended him to one of the king's favorites, by whom he was carefully trained until he finally entered upon an ecclesiastical career. So education however meagre and elementary was regarded as a jewel of great price, a thing worth striving for, something which endowed its possessor with superiority over those who lacked it.

One who would become a priest must have at least the ability to read and write." A young huntsman from Thuringia, employed by Duke Sigivald was pricked by conscience and desired to be a

28. *Vitae Patrum*, IX, 1.

priest. Having no one to advise him, he began while yet a layman, to rise from his bed once or twice each night and thus prostrate upon the ground, he poured forth prayer to God. Yet he did not know what to say because he was ignorant of letters. But seeing in the chapel the letters upon images of the apostles and other saints, he imitated them on bark. And since priests and abbots were in frequent association with his master, he asked one of the younger men, aside, the names of the letters and so began to understand them. But by the help of God he both read and wrote before he knew the succession of letters.²⁹ He occupied an abbot's throne before his death.

Thus the church had taken over what education still remained,³⁰ and those who would have more than the merest rudiments must seek her aid. Her influence however was exerted against pagan literature.³¹ As Gregory says, "The wisdom of philosophers is the enemy of God."³² Ampère states briefly what the instruction given in monastic schools included. They had to copy manuscripts and chant the services, so must know how to read, write and sing. Painting and architecture came to belong to them also. They had to know something of mathematics and astronomy in order to determine the time of moveable feasts, as Easter. In the fourth century they must needs know something of antiquity to combat paganism. In the sixth century they were warring against philosophers and stoics, so they must study ancient philosophy in order to refute them.³³

29. Vitae Patrum, XII.

30. Roger, p. 130.

31. See Roger, Chapter IV., 1.

32. S. Mart. I, Praefatio.

33. Ampère, Vol. II, p. 278.

Gregory's ideas as to the standards for priestly duties are recorded in one of the books on the miracles of St. Martin. Owing to Gregory's own illness, he asked one of the priests to celebrate mass. "But when that priest uttered the sacred words somewhat uncouthly, many of our people began to laugh at him, saying; 'It were better to be silent, than to speak so rudely.' But the following night I saw a man in a vision speaking to me; 'Concerning the mysteries of God there must be no disputation.' I call God to witness that I have not invented this, but that I heard the very words which I have made known to you. Therefore, beloved, let no one presume to call in question anything pertaining to this mystery, because with the majesty of God frankness undefiled avails more than the subtleties of philosophers³⁴. In this case the audience appear to have been more critical than the bishop himself.

An examination of Gregory's comments on various men who held the episcopal office in his time or a little earlier may be somewhat enlightening. In 591 a certain Syrian trader, Eusebius, by offering heavy bribes was elected bishop of Paris. He removed the entire "schola" of his predecessor, and filled the bishop's house with men of his own race.³⁵ The notorious warrior bishops, Salonius of Ambrun and Sagittarius of Gap, though trained by Nicotius of Lyons, as soon as they became bishops, entered upon a reckless career of crime. They seized property, committed murder and adultery, attacked the bishop of St. Paul-Trois-Châteaux at his own table with swords and arrows, and were

34. S. Mart., II, 1.

35. H. F. X. 26.

finally removed from office. They appealed to the pope who restored them. They then indulged in greater crimes, and even fought, girt with arms like laymen, in the battles against the Langobards, killing many with their own hands.³⁶ Cautinus of Auvergne has already been mentioned as being utterly wicked and absolutely without intellectual culture, whether ecclesiastical or secular.³⁷ Gregory devotes special attention to the bishops of Tours, Licinius,³⁸ ninth in order from St. Martin, held the see in the time of Clovis. He, for love of God went to the Orient, and visited the holy places. He even reached Jerusalem, and often looked upon the places of the passion and resurrection of the Lord, of which we read in the Evangels.³⁹ Bishops Theodore and Proculus⁴⁰ were appointed at the command of Queen Clotilda, their countrywoman, because they had been driven out of Burgundy. The eleventh bishop of Tours,⁴¹ also a Burgundian, likewise owed his appointment to the Queen. The twelfth⁴² was a senator of Auvergne and very rich. He built or enlarged two churches within the city. Leo⁴³ held the office six months, He was a builder in wood and constructed towers covered with gold, some of which are still standing, Gregory says (591?). Injuriosus⁴⁴ was a citizen of Tours, of rather ordinary parentage but free-born. He was a church builder. Baudinus⁴⁵ gave much to the poor, and institu-

36. H. F. V. 21.

37. IV. 12. See Chapter I. Gallic Society. p.9.

38. H. F. X. 31, 9.

39. H. F. II, 39.

40. H. F. X. 31, 10.

41. H. F. X, 31, 11.

42. H. F. X, 31, 12.

43. H. F. X, 31, 13.

44. H. F. X, 31, 15.

45. H. F. X, 31, 16.

ted the mensa canonicorum ^{45a}. Guntharius ⁵⁰ after becoming bishop, gave way to convivial habits which proved his ruin. Gregory's predecessor Eufronius ⁴⁷ was of senatorial family. In his time Tours was visited by a terrible fire which burned all the churches. He rebuilt or restored several of these.

It seems worthy of note that in this epitome of the character and achievements of his episcopal forerunners, Gregory makes not the slightest allusion to their education or intellectual ability. Can it be that these men who were at the heart as it were, of the church in Gaul, were inferior in this respect, or does Gregory consider it as a matter of too little importance to be mentioned. He does speak of bishops of other cities, who were learned, some in the Scriptures, and others in letters. Thus Quintianus ⁴⁸ of Auvergne was considered very well versed in Holy Writ. Ursinius ⁴⁹ of Cahors was so well trained in ecclesiastical writings that he could repeat from memory the different genealogies written in the books of the Old Testament, "a thing which is considered very difficult by many. This man was very just in his judgments and defended the peace of his church from the hands of evil judges."

As men well trained in letters, Gregory mentions his ancestor Gregory of Langres, ⁵⁰ Nicetius of Lyons ⁵¹ who was nurtured with extreme care in letters, and the other Nicetius of Trèves ⁵² who was brought up by very careful parents, and instructed in letters. Sulpicius bishop of Bourges ⁵³ was a very noble man, and belonged to one of the

45a. The common table at which all clerics connected with a church dined.

46. H. P. X. 31, 17.

47. H. P. X. 31, 18.

48. Vitae Patrum, IV.

49. H. P. V, 43.

50. Vitae Patrum, VII.

51. Vitae Patrum, VIII.

52. Vitae Patrum, XVII.

53. H. P. VI, 39.

foremost senatorial families in Gaul. He was well trained in rhetoric and in the art of verse he was second to none. Another learned and traveled bishop was Martin of Braga⁵⁴ who visited the Orient and was so imbued with letters that he was considered second to none of his contemporaries.

It is strange that Gregory, although he describes with tender sympathy the early life of his uncle and teacher Gallus,⁵⁵ tells nothing of his education. He was the oldest son of a noble senatorial family, and from his youth was devoted to God, receiving the tonsure while quite young. He possessed a voice of angelic sweetness which led King Theodoric to take him into his palace and cherish him as his own son. As bishop of Auvergne, he saved his people from the plague by intercession with God, and after his death miracles were wrought at his tomb. The life of his other fatherly instructor Avitus of Auvergne is not included among Gregory's monographs of the fathers.

There are two men of this period, who in addition to Gregory himself come under the class of strictly literary men; Ferreolus Bishop of Uzès, and Fortunatus who though an Italian educated at Ravenna was a noteworthy figure in the literary circles of the day. Of Ferreolus,⁵⁶ Gregory merely says: "He was a man of great holiness and died full of wisdom and knowledge. He wrote some volumes of letters in the style of Sidonius."

Fortunatus shares with Gregory the distinction of portraying contemporary life in Gaul, but he was a poet and not a historian. He describes a small circle of poets and literary men, and is loud in his praise of their talents and accomplishments.⁵⁷

54. H. F. V. 38.

55. Vitae Patrum, VI.

56. H. F. VI, 7.

57. Roger, p. 100.

Among them he names Felix bishop of Nantes, with whom Gregory had the violent quarrel over the possession of a certain church property, which gave rise to a virulent correspondence between the two.⁵⁸ Most of the others named by him are but slightly known to history, and we cannot place much confidence in the glowing and somewhat fulsome praise of Fortunatus when we remember that he was a court poet, dependant on the patronage of the great. Thus he asserts that King Charibert spoke the Latin language better than the Romans themselves⁵⁹ and rates most highly the knowledge of Chilperic and his taste for letters.⁶⁰ We shall see later what the more candid Gregory thought of Chilperic's literary works.

While at the court of Sigibert who aspired to be considered a patron of letters, Fortunatus wrote an epithalamium on the marriage of that prince with Brunhilda;⁶¹ he also composed a long poem on the sad history of Queen Galswintha, one of the many victims of Chilperic.⁶² Gregory however mentions none of his secular works, but calls him "the priest Fortunatus, my fellow servant,"⁶³ and refers to the lives of various saints which he composed, always mentioning him with warm admiration.⁶⁴ He alludes to tales of miracles⁶⁵ related to him by the Italian poet, and quotes from his poem on St. Laurentius.⁶⁶

58. H. F. V. 5.
 59. Roger, p. 102. Fortunatus, *Coro.* 6, 2, 97.
 60. Ampère, Vol. II, p. 322.
 61. " " " p. 317, 318. See H. F. IV., 27.
 62. " " " pp. 319-322. " H. F. IV., 28.
 63. Gregorius, S. Mart. I, 13.
 64. " Epistola de Virtutibus S. Martini. See above Chapter II. p. 34, 35, 36.
 65. S. Mart. I, XIII, XIV.
 66. De Gloria Mart., XLII.

Fortunatus' influence was doubtless exerted only over a very small range, and probably had very little effect on the general culture of the age. The most interesting thing about him is his friendship with Radegunda. In her biography which he wrote he says: "This maiden among other accomplishments which were suitable for her sex, was learned in letters."⁶⁷ Fortunatus after his fitful career at several courts, became a priest and spent the rest of his life at Poitiers near Radegunda.⁶⁸

The queen-abbess, always a picturesque figure, appears and disappears, throughout Gregory's chronicle. He devotes a long chapter⁶⁹ in the book on the Glory of the Martyrs to an account of her funeral which he attended. He says nothing about her education or accomplishments, but records a lengthy letter on monastic affairs which Radegunda wrote to the bishops with her own hand, and which she desired to have preserved in the archives of the church.⁷⁰

Passing to the world lying beyond the confines of church and monastery, we find in Gregory only a few scattered references to the state of education among the laity. Let us turn to the picture of the wife of Namatius, bishop of Gregory's home town Clément. She was having built outside the

67. Fortunatus, Vita Radegundis, p. 38. Roger, p. 102.

68. Ampère, Vol. II. p. 31B.

69. De Gloria Confess. CVI.

70. H. P. IX. 42.

city, a church, and desired to have it adorned with scenes from the lives of the saints. "She held a book on her lap, and read the records of bygone times, and thus indicated to the painters what ought to be represented upon the walls."⁷¹ A gracious figure of a noble dame, who understood what she read and could impart her information to others.

Of Celsus, the patrician Gregory says: "He was boastful in words, quick at repartee, and skilled in the law;⁷² and of the two confidential advisers of King Theodobert, "They were both wise and thoroughly trained in rhetoric."⁷³

Were members of the royal line given a more liberal education than their subjects? Gregory offers very slight information on the subject. He says that Gundovald, the unacknowledged son of Lothair I, was born in Gaul, brought up with diligent care and instructed in letters.⁷⁴ He dwells more at length on the pretensions of King Chilperic. This royal tyrant held unorthodox opinions on the Trinity and tried unsuccessfully to impose them on the clergy. He wrote a little treatise⁷⁵ on the subject and desired them to follow its teachings much to the indignation of the bishops. "This same king wrote other books in verse, as if following Sedulius;⁷⁶ but these little poems are not according to any metre whatsoever. He also added some letters to our alphabet, namely: ω as the Greeks have it, ϵ , θ , ν , which are represented by these

71. H. F. II, 17.

72. H. F. IV, 24.

73. H. F. III, 33.

74. H. F. VI, 24.

75. H. F. V, 45.

76. Sedulius. see note 17.

ωψζα
 characters: And he sent a notice to all the cities of his Kingdom that boys should be taught them, and that books written in earlier times should be smoothed off with pumice and written anew".⁷⁷ This seems to have been due merely to self-conceit and not done with the idea of teaching children to read Greek⁷⁸ but to impose arbitrarily upon the language an invention of his own.

Once more Gregory takes up the vexed subject of Chilperic's literary attainments in his final sketch of the King's life and deeds, and disposes of it as follows: "And he composed two books, as if he had carefully studied Sedulius,⁷⁹ but these wretched versicles are so weak that they cannot stand on their feet; and because he did not know how, he put short syllables where long ones should have been, and long ones for short ones; he wrote other little works and hymns and masses besides, which could by no means be received."⁸⁰ This is Gregory's final criticism on the feeble attempts of the sole Frankish king who tried to wrest literary fame from posterity.

Thus what the representative man of letters in his own day has to tell us of the education and intellectual culture of that period can be brought within the compass of a very few pages. To read and write, to figure, to be well versed in the Scriptures, and perhaps --as concerns the favored few--to have read a few lines of Virgil and studied a little rhetoric, was more than enough for the man of that day, for after all, the world was drawing near its end⁸¹ and what more does a man need than that which makes for the salvation of his soul?

77. H. F. V. 46.

78. Roger, p. 92.

79. Sedulius was a Latin Christian poet of the fifth century, A. D. Harper's Latin Dictionary.

80. R. F. VI. 46.

81. H. F. I. Prologue.

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