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## The Puritans and Art

Non-Catholic writers like Matthew Arnold (says the 'Ave Maria') have scored the Puritans for their warfare against art. The vandalism of these fanatics is almost beyond belief. They destroyed the first National Gallery of England, which contained nine Raphaels, eleven Correggios, and twenty-eight Titians; and only the influence of honest John Selden prevented a Puritan Parliament from spoiling the two great universities, Oxford and Cambridge. But the Protestants of an earlier day had just as little love of beauty as the Puritans. Art and literature suffered more than will ever be known in the reign of Edward VI. The notion of justification by faith alone caused the demolition of many exquisite creations and the defacement of what could not easily be destroyed.

The celebration of the tercentenary of the Bodleian Library at Oxford is the occasion of an interesting article by Mr. J. B. Firth in the current 'Fortnightly Review.' He tells how the pre-Reformation library was destroyed, and of the industry and good fortune of Sir Thomas Bodley in founding another :-

Edward VI, in the zeal of his Protestantism, published an edict for 'the calling out of all superstitious books, as missals, legends, and the like'; and commissioners were appointed to visit the universities for that purpose. In due course they came to Oxford. There they worked havoc. They carried out their instructions so literally that they destroyed every illuminated missal or manuscript on which they laid hands. It is probable indeed that they condemned volumes at a hazard without regard for their contents, and that the mere presence of a rubricated initial was held to be sufficient evidence that a manuscript was Papistical and idolatrous. Possibly, too, in the confusion caused by such a visitation, books were freely looted and stolen; but the fact remains that after they had completed their visitation the library stood empty. The dispersal and destruction of the library at Oxford were due principally to religious bigotry.

## The Early German Bibles

Monsignor John S. Vaughan, in his very interesting and valuable contribution, 'Concerning the Holy Bible' (says a correspondent of the 'Catholic Times'), deals at considerable length with the editions of the Bible in German which were printed before Luther's time. He mentions that the Paulist Fathers of New York in their library possess a copy of Anton Konruger's splendid Bible in German, published in 1483. May I add that the Catholic University at Washington contains another copy of one of these early Bibles, printed prior to Luther's birth. It is exhibited in the Museum of Biblical Archaeology founded there by the Orientalist, Rev. Dr. Hyvernat. But may I further draw the attention of your readers interested on this subject to the copies of these early Bibles preserved much nearer home in our own British Museum? The British Museum Library contains very many copies of early Catholic vernaculars, including those in German. It has copies of eight different editions of Bibles printed in German and bearing dates previous to Luther's birth, and three more editions bearing dates before his losing the Catholic faith. There are also in that library two editions in Low German on the dialect about Cologne. Among these German Bibles the earliest is 'not later' than 1466. They also include a well-preserved copy of Anton Konruger's Bible of 1483. One or other of these early Bibles is usually on view in the cases illustrating early German printing, which are arranged in the King's Library gallery of the museum. A full list is published in the Catalogue of Printed Bibles sold in the Museum. A vast amount of information on these German Bibles may be found in Janssen's great work, 'The History of the German People at the close of the Middle Ages.'

You will find that the mere resolve not to be useless, and the honest desire to help other people, will, in the quickest and most delicate ways, also improve yourself.

Jesus Christ, our great model, suffered much for us; let us bear our afflictions cheerfully, seeing that through them we have the happiness of resembling Him.

We prefer soil which produces abundant harvests after we have cultivated it in preference to that which, though it have not thorns, yet yields but little fruit.

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