

representation ; but in this case, the distinctness of his pictures only serves to show his want of any clear conception as to what suppositions would explain the phenomena. He describes the earth as an oblong floor, surrounded by upright walls, and covered by a vault, below which the heavenly bodies perform their revolutions, going round a certain high mountain, which occupies the northern parts of the earth, and makes night by intercepting the light of the sun. In Augustin¹² (who flourished A. D. 400) the opinion is treated on other grounds ; and without denying the globular form of the earth, it is asserted that there are no inhabitants on the opposite side, because no such race is recorded by Scripture among the descendants of Adam.¹³ Considerations of the same kind operated in the well-known instance of Virgil, Bishop of Salzburg, in the eighth century. When he was reported to Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz, as holding the existence of Antipodes, the prelate was shocked at the assumption, as it seemed to him, of a world of human beings, out of the reach of the conditions of salvation ; and application was made to Pope Zachary for a censure of the holder of this dangerous doctrine. It does not, however, appear that this led to any severity ; and the story of the deposition of Virgil from his bishopric, which is circulated by Kepler and by more modern writers, is undoubtedly altogether false. The same scruples continued to prevail among Christian writers to a later period ; and Tostatus¹⁴ notes the opinion of the rotundity of the earth as an "unsafe" doctrine, only a few years before Columbus visited the other hemisphere.

8. *Intellectual Condition of the Religious Orders.*—It must be recollected, however, that though these were the views and tenets of many religious writers, and though they may be taken as indications of the prevalent and characteristic temper of the times of which we speak, they never were universal. Such a confusion of thought affects the minds of many persons, even in the most enlightened times ; and in what we call the Dark Ages, though clear views on such subjects might be more rare, those who gave their minds to science, entertained the true opinion of the figure of the earth. Thus Boëthius¹⁵ (in the sixth century) urges the smallness of the globe of the earth, com-

¹² *Civ. D.* xvi. 9.

¹³ It appears, however, that scriptural arguments were found on the other side. St. Jerome says (*Comm. in Ezech.* i. 6), speaking of the two cherubims with four faces, seen by the prophet, and the interpretation of the vision : "Alii vero qui philosophorum stultam sequuntur sapientiam, duo hemispheria in duobus templi cherubim, nos et antipodes, quasi supinos et cadentes homines suspicantur."

¹⁴ Montfauc. *Patr.* t. ii.

¹⁵ Boëthius, *Cons.* ii. pr. 7.