

pared with the heavens, as a reason to repress our love of glory. This work, it will be recollected, was translated into the Anglo-Saxon by our own Alfred. It was also commented on by Bede, who, in what he says on this passage, assents to the doctrine, and shows an acquaintance with Ptolemy and his commentators, both Arabian and Greek. Gerbert, in the tenth century, went from France to Spain to study astronomy with the Arabians, and soon surpassed his masters. He is reported to have fabricated clocks, and an astrolabe of peculiar construction. Gerbert afterwards (in the last year of the first thousand from the birth of Christ) became pope, by the name of Sylvester II. Among other cultivators of the sciences, some of whom, from their proficiency, must have possessed with considerable clearness and steadiness the elementary ideas on which it depends, we may here mention, after Montucla,¹⁶ Adelbold, whose work *On the Sphere* was addressed to Pope Sylvester, and whose geometrical reasonings are, according to Montucla,¹⁷ vague and chimerical; Hermann Contractus, a monk of St. Gall, who, in 1050, published astronomical works; William of Hirsaugen, who followed his example in 1080; Robert of Lorraine, who was made Bishop of Hereford by William the Conqueror, in consequence of his astronomical knowledge. In the next century, Adelhard Goth, an Englishman, travelled among the Arabs for purposes of study, as Gerbert had done in the preceding age; and on his return, translated the *Elements of Euclid*, which he had brought from Spain or Egypt. Robert Grosstête, Bishop of Lincoln, was the author of an *Epitome on the Sphere*; Roger Bacon, in his youth the contemporary of Robert, and of his brother Adam Marsh, praises very highly their knowledge in mathematics.

“And here,” says the French historian of mathematics, whom I have followed in the preceding relation, “it is impossible not to reflect that all those men who, if they did not augment the treasure of the sciences, at least served to transmit it, were monks, or had been such originally. Convents were, during these stormy ages, the asylum of sciences and letters. Without these religious men, who, in the silence of their monasteries, occupied themselves in transcribing, in studying, and in imitating the works of the ancients, well or ill, those works would have perished; perhaps not one of them would have come down to us. The thread which connects us with the Greeks and Romans would have been snapt asunder; the precious productions of

¹⁶ Mont. i. 502.

¹⁷ Ib. i. 508.