and civil life, the knowledge of which is necessarily in the hands of a class of professed theologians. These are the *'ulemā (q.v.),* “ knowers,” theology being briefly named “ the knowledge ” *('ilm).* Their influence is enormous and hardly has a parallel in the history of religions. For it is not supported by temporal agencies like the spiritual authority of the Christian priesthood in the middle ages, but is a pure power of knowledge over the ignorant masses, who do nothing without consulting their spiritual advisers. When the vigorous Spanish sultan Mansūr b. Abī ‘Āmir proposed to confiscate a religious foundation and the assembled ulemā refused to approve the act, and were threatened by his vizier, one of them replied, “ All the evil you say of us applies to yourself; you seek unjust gains and support your injustice by threats; you take bribes and practise ungodliness in the world. But we are guides on the path of righteousness, lights in the darkness, and bulwarks of Islam; we decide what is just or unjust and declare the right; through us the precepts of religion are maintained. We know that the sultan will soon think better of the matter; but, if he persists, every act of his government will be null, for every treaty of peace and war, every act of sale and purchase, is valid only through our testimony.” With this answer they left the assembly, and the sultan's apology overtook them before they had passed the palace gate.@@1 The same consciousness of inde­pendent authority and strength still survives among the ulemā. Thus the sheikh ul-Islām 'Abbāsī (who was deposed by the professors of the Azhar in 1882) had in the first period of his presidency a sharp conflict with 'Abbās Pasha, viceroy of Egypt, who asked of him an unjust legal opinion in matters of inherit­ance. When bribes and threats failed, the sheikh was thrown into chains and treated with great severity, but it was the pasha who finally yielded, and 'Abbāsī was recalled to honours and rich rewards.

Thc way in which the ulemā arc recruited and formed into a hierarchy with a vigorous *esprit de corps* throws an instructive light on the whole subject before us. The brilliant days are past when the universities of Damascus, Bagdad, Nīshāpūr, Cairo, Kairawān, Seville, Cordova, were thronged by thousands of students of theology, when a professor had often hundreds or even, like Bukhārī, thousands of hearers, and when vast estates in the hands of the clergy fed both masters and scholars. Of the great universities but one survives—the Azhar mosque at Cairo—where thousands of students still gather to follow a course of study which gives an accurate picture of the Mahom­medan ideal of theological education.

The students of theology generally begin their course in early youth, but not seldom in riper years. Almost all come from the lowest orders, a few from the middle classes, and none from the highest ranks of society—a fact which in itself excludes all elements of freer and more refined education. These sons of poor peasants, artisans or tradesmen are already disposed to narrow fanaticism, and generally take up study as a means of livelihood rather than from genuine religious interest. The scholar appears before the president’s secretary with his poor belongings tied up in a red handkerchief, and after a brief interrogatory is entered on the list of one of the four orthodox rites—Shāfi'ite, Hanifite, Mālikite and Hanbalite (see Mahommedan Law). If he is lucky he gets a sleeping-place within the mosque, a chest to hold his things, and a daily ration of bread. The less fortunate make shift to live outside as best they can, but arc all day in the mosque, and are seldom deserted by Moslem charity. Having kissed the hands of the sheikh and teachers of his school, the pupil awaits the beginning of the lectures. For books a few compendiums suffice him. Professors and students gather every morning for the daily prayer; then the professors take their seats at the foot of the pillars of the great court and the students crouch on mats at their feet. The beginner takes first a course in the grammar of classical Arabic, for he has hitherto learned only to read, write and count. The rules of grammar are read out in the memorial verses of the *Ajrūmīya,* and the teacher adds an exposition, generally read from a printed commentary. the student's chief task is to know the rules by heart ; this accomplished, he is dismissed at the end of the year with a certificate (*ijāza*), entered in his textbook, which permits him to teach it to others. The second year is devoted to dogmatic *(kalām* and *tawhīd*), taught in the same mechanical way. The dog­mas of Islam are not copious, and the attributes of God are the chief

subject taken up. They are demonstrated by scholastic dialectic, and at the end of his second year the student, receiving his certificate, deems himself a pillar of the faith. The study of law *(fiqh),* which rests on Koran and tradition, is more difficult and complex, and begins, but is often not completed, in the third year. The student had learned the Koran by heart at school and has often repeated it since, but only now is the sense of its words explained to him. Of the traditions of the Prophet he has learned something incidentally in other lectures; he is now regularly introduced to their vast artificial system. From these two sources are derived all religious and civil laws, for Islam is a political as well as a religious institution. The five main points of religious law, “ the pillars of Islam,” have been enumerated in the article Mahommedan Religion; the civil law, on the development of which Roman law had some influence, is treated under heads similar to those of Western jurisprudence. It is here that the differences between the four schools come most into notice: the Hanifite praxis is the least rigorous, then the Shäfi'ite; the Hanbalites, whose system is the strictest, have practically dis­appeared in the Mālikites. The Hanifite rite is official in the Turkish Empire, and is followed in all government offices whenever a decision still depends on the sacred law, as well as by all Mahommedans of Turkish race. In this as in the previous studies a compendium is learned by heart, and explanations are given from commentaries and noted down by the students word for word. The professors are expressly forbidden to add anything of their own. The recog­nized books of jurisprudence, some of which run to over twenty folio volumes, are vastly learned, and occasionally show sound sense, but excel mainly in useless hair-splitting and feats of scholastic gymnastics, for which the Arabian race has a natural gift.

Besides the three main disciplines the student takes up according to his tastes other subjects, such as rhetoric *(ma'ānī wabayāri),* logic *(mantiq),* prosody (*'arūd),* and the doctrine of the correct pronunciation of the Koran *(qirā’a watajwīd).* After three or four years, fortified with the certificates of his various professors, he seeks a place in a law-court or as a teacher, preacher, cadi, or mufti of a village or minor town, or else one of the innumerable posts of con­fidence for which the complicated ceremonial of Mahommedanism demands a theologian, and which are generally paid out of pious foundations. A place is not hard to find, for the powerful corpora­tion of the ulemã seeks to put its own members into all posts, and, though the remuneration is at first small, the young *'ālim* gradually accumulates the revenues of several offices. Gifts, too, fall in, and with his native avarice and economy he rises in wealth, position and reputation for piety. The commonalty revere him and kiss his hand; the rich show him at least outward respect; and even the government treats him as a person to whom consideration is due íor his influence with the masses.

This sketch of his education is enough to explain the narrow­mindedness of the *'(ālim.* He deems all non-theological science to be vain or hurtful, has no notion of progress, and regards true science—*i.e.* theology—as having reached finality, so that a new supercommentary or a new students’ manual is the only thing that is perhaps still worth writing. How the mental faculties are blunted by scholasticism and mere memory work must be seen to be believed ; such an education is enough to spoil the best head. All originality is crushed out and a blind and ludicrous dependence on written tradition—even in things profane—takes its place. Acuteness degenerates into hair-splitting and clever plays on words after the manner of the rabbins. The Azhar students not seldom enter government offices and even hold important administrative posts, but they never lose the stamp of their education—the narrow, un- teachable spirit, incapable of progress, always lost in external details, and never able to grasp principles and get behind forms to the substance of a matter.

Yet it is but a small fraction of the ulemã of the Moslem world that enjoy even such an education as the Azhar affords. It draws few students from foreign parts,@@2 where the local schools are of the poorest kind, except in India (thanks to a British government) and perhaps in Constantinople.@@3 Bokhara was once a chief seat of learning, but is now so sunk in narrow fanaticism that its eighty *madrasas (medresses)* with their 5000 students only turn out a bigoted and foolish clergy (Vámbéry).@@4 But for this very reason Bokhārā is famed as a luminary of pure theology and spreads its influence over Turkestan, Siberia, China, Kashmir, Afghanistan, and even over India. Minor schools attached to mosques are found in other places, but teach still less than the great schools already mentioned.

Except fin India, where it is controlled by the government,

@@@1 Von Kremer, *Gesch. d. herrschenden Ideen d. Islams,* p. 464 (Leipzig, 1868).

@@@2 In 1878 seventeen lecture-rooms of the Azhar had 3707 students, of whom only 64 came from Constantinople and the northern parts of the Ottoman Empire, 8 from North Arabia, 1 from the government cf Bagdad, 12 from Kurdistan, and 7 from India with its thirty million Sunnites.

@@@3 In Kazan also the standard of learning seems to have been raised by Russian and Western scholars.

@@@4 The *madrasa* is here a college, generally attached to a mosque, with lands whose revenues provide the means of instruction and in part also food and residence for scholars and teachers.