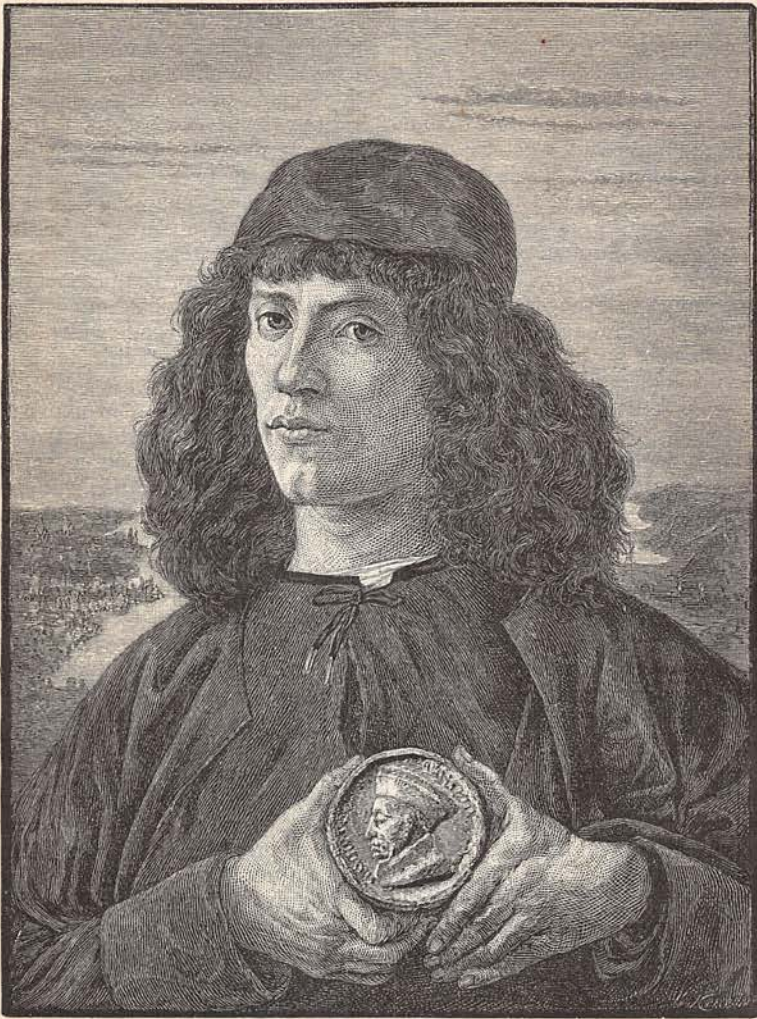


THE UNIVERSITY OF ROME.



PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA. (AFTER ORIGINAL IN THE UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE; PAINTER UNKNOWN.)

THE history of the University of Rome is in many respects representative; it is approximately the history of every Italian university, and the typical features are here displayed in a more pronounced degree than in the annals of the institutions more remote from the seats of authority. Its unedifying career therefore presents a most instructive chapter of history, and teaches a lesson which the Italian government has not failed to take to heart and to apply with exemplary zeal and fearlessness.

Previous to 1870, education in Italy was generally looked upon as the peculiar prov-

ince of the clergy, and even at the present time, in spite of the professedly anti-clerical policy of the government, the elementary instruction is largely in the hands of the priests. The middle class, and, indeed, many of the highest aristocracy, prefer to intrust their children from an early age to their spiritual advisers, rather than assume themselves the care and the responsibility of their education. Public opinion, at least among the conservative class, sanctions this course, and however much the government may seek to discourage it, the priest will maintain his influence in the family

and obstinately cling to his traditional privilege of molding the character of the

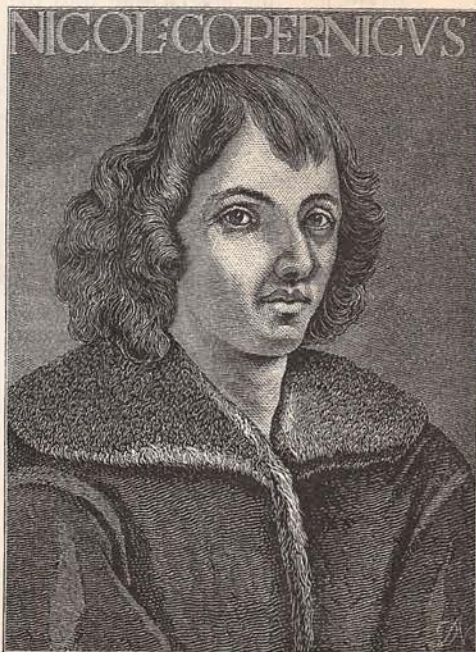


PADRE ANGELO SECCHI.

rising generation. This is hardly to be wondered at, as far as the priest himself and the Roman aristocracy are concerned: a Borghese or a Barberini is naturally loyal to the church with which his interests and all the splendid traditions of his family are identified; he believes, with a *naïveté* which is sometimes touching, that the Italian government and all the other "abominations" will soon be visited with the vengeance of God, and that the Holy Father will then re-enter upon his just inheritance. He entertains a cardinal at dinner at least once a week, and listens with devoutness to his prophecies of the impending change. He devours eagerly all the gossip from the Vatican, shrugs his shoulders at the mention of King Humbert's name, and hermetically seals his soul to all the "pernicious influences" of the age.

It need not cause surprise, I say, if a grandee of this type sends his daughter to a convent and has his son trained in the worn-out lore and childish superstitions which are taught within the walls of the cloistral schools and the College of the Propaganda. But when one finds liberal and progressive citizens, adherents of the government, playing into the hands of their enemies in exactly the same fashion, one is fairly staggered at the contradictions in the

national character. And yet a number of such instances have come to my notice during the last months, and have somewhat shaken my faith in the sincerity of the liberal professions which one hears daily in Parliament, in cafés, and on street corners. One can hardly walk a hundred steps, on a fine afternoon, in any of the principal thoroughfares of Rome (or, indeed, of any Italian city), without encountering a procession of boys in black, gray or blue cloaks, marching in tolerable order under the guidance of one or more priests. It is a sad sight, and augurs ill for the future of Italy. What can be more forced and unnatural than the dreary routine of these cloistral institutes! Boys, removed in their tender years from their homes, which they revisit only at long intervals during the brief vacations, and repressed in their healthful sports by the ever-vigilant eye of the priest, can hardly be expected to make an exemplary use of their liberty when finally they obtain it. Their teachers, themselves the representatives of a defunct civilization, have filled them with sentimental rubbish which has no application to the actual business of life; the expurgated, or, in other words, falsified text-books give utterly distorted views of history, philosophy, science,—in fact, of any discipline with



COPERNICUS (AFTER THE ORIGINAL IN THE UFFIZI GALLERY).

which they profess to deal; and, what is worst of all, disloyalty to the present government and "the United Italy," which is



COUNT MAMIANI.

an article of faith with the Roman clergy, can scarcely help finding its way into the young minds of the future citizens of the state. Thus many a young Italian spends his boyhood in systematically unfitting himself for the duties which he is to fulfill and the position which he is to occupy in the service of his newly reconstructed country. He passes by a sudden leap from childhood to manhood, without ever having known any intermediate stage of limited freedom and responsibility; he has never been that frank, careless and irrepressible creature whose generic name is "boy." At the age of eighteen, when he is ready to enter the university, he is a young gentleman of painfully decorous demeanor, who spends the greater part of his day in idleness, sipping black coffee or sugar-water and smoking cheap cigars in a fashionable café. Leap-frog would appear to him the height of absurdity, and even base-ball, or the Italian substitute for it, would fail to quicken his languid pulses. If you try to converse with him on any topic of the day, he will bewilder you by the childishness of his opinions; and yet, considering the fact that he has passed his early years in studiously acquiring ignorance regarding all the vital

interests of life, it would be wonderful if the result were different.

I should not venture to assert that even a majority of the Italian youth who attend institutions of learning belong to the type I have here described; but that the type is alarmingly common, especially among graduates of private (which in most cases means priestly) institutes, is a matter of experience of which any frequenter of Roman society can easily convince himself. From public schools of all grades, the priests are not legally excluded, but their unwillingness to take the oath of allegiance to the present government or in any way to subordinate themselves to the secular authorities naturally disqualifies them for the service of the state. But for all that they manage to maintain their influence as educators of youth, as the following statistics, taken from the government year-book for 1878, will show. According to this authority there were in the scholastic year 1861-62, 983,336 children, male and female, who were, in all the provinces of Italy,* enjoying elementary instruction in public schools, and 125,888 who were instructed in private institutes; in 1871-72, after the conquest of Rome by the Italians, the numbers were 1,545,890



RUGGERO BONGHI.

and 177,157; and in 1875-76, the last year of which complete reports are found in the

* The papal province not included.

official register, 1,722,669* and 208,948 represent the relative attendance of public and private schools. It will be seen from this, that while the number of children who receive instruction has been nearly doubled during fourteen years, the patronage of private institutes has increased in about the same proportion as that of the schools supported by the municipalities. Nevertheless, when we consider that the total population of the kingdom, according to the last census (1871), is about twenty-seven millions, of which more than nineteen millions and a half can neither read nor write, it is evident that there is, as yet, a wide field for every one who is disposed to interest himself in the cause of popular instruction. The new government certainly deserves much credit for the energy with which it has prosecuted its measures for the enlightenment of the masses, and the next census will undoubtedly give evidence of a considerable progress. The rich and varied exhibit in the pedagogic museum in Rome and the character of the officials at its head, give further proof that the new secular Italy has a wide mental horizon and is watching with eager sympathy every educational experiment that is made in other parts of the world, being ever ready to profit by the experience of her more advanced neighbors. Especially in the organization of the so-called secondary classical instruction (*Istruzione secondaria classica*), many important lessons have been learned from Germany, and the Italian *gymnasia* betray plainly enough that they have been modeled after the Prussian institutions of the same name. And yet, according to the testimony of many teachers with whom I have conversed, the working of the system has, so far, not proved very satisfactory. An Italian boy has not the genius for imbibing culture that is native to a German; even long after he has attained the growth of a man, his notions of the world, of society and of his own importance in it, are those of a child. Thus a professor in the University of Rome lately assured me that there were but few among his students (all graduates of *lycea* and *gymnasia*) who had in their minds any idea of the map, or could approximately place a country or a city when it was mentioned.

"Among us," he said, "geography is a science, and not as in Germany, an elementary accomplishment and an indispensable

requisite for every one who moves in good society. If you know geography here, you have already a claim to being called learned."

Another professor, in discussing the same subject, complained that his students, in the course of a philosophical lecture or discussion, would ask him questions betraying a *naïveté* and an incapacity for philosophical thought which at times drove him to despair and made him inclined to hand in his resignation to the government. I may be pardoned for reporting part of the conversation in the words of my informant, as they gave me the clue to the whole situation, and explained to me how so much apparently excellent legislation (such as is found in the official code of instruction) could produce such unsatisfactory results.

"Our chief trouble in Italy," the professor observed, "lies in the fact that we have no large class of *cultivated* people, in the sense in which the term is used in England and Germany. We have learned men and ignorant men, but the space between these two poles is but sparsely populated. Our peasants are quick-witted and bright, while the German and the English peasants are slow and stupid. Our common people talk most entertainingly and are naturally gifted with humor and good sound sense. But their talk is all personal; their mental horizon is narrow. The same is the case with the middle class Italian. He is externally polished, and can apply himself easily to anything in which his power of observation can assist him. But he has no turn for abstract reasoning. The children of these people bring with them from home not even the most rudimentary culture, and everything is thus left to the school; the school, however, can only do its work well, or do the best work of which it is capable, when it supplements the culture received at home. Our *gymnasia* are as yet experiments; our educational legislation too is largely experimental, and one minister is apt to undo what his predecessor accomplished. Under such circumstances no system can really be put to a fair test, and accordingly we have to be guarded even in the conclusions we draw from our present experiences."

Nominally, at least, the conditions for admission to an Italian university are nearly equal to what is required for passing the *Abiturienten Examen* in Germany, by which a student there gains the diploma entitling him to matriculation in a university; but

* The province of Rome is here included.

practically the Italian freshman is far less mature and far less qualified for independent scientific study than his Teutonic brother. Even though he may, in some instances, possess an equal amount of positive knowledge, he does not possess the same power of applying it, but remains abjectly dependent upon the guidance of his professor. If he has any enthusiasm at all for his studies, he is apt to swear *in verba magistri*; in other words, he is a pupil, rather than a student, and is likely to remain so to the day of his graduation. It is very evident that this psychological peculiarity of the race must, to a great extent, frustrate the benevolent intentions of the government and prevent the universities from being *de facto* what on paper they appear to be. As no institution of learning can exist without students, it becomes necessary to adapt the conditions for admission and promotion to the average acquirements of the candidates, and if the law stipulates a higher proficiency in certain branches than the applicants possess, the remedy lies near to evade the law, or rather to interpret it less rigidly than its framers may have intended. The student who upon such a test obtains his degree, be it in medicine, law, civil engineering, or any of the sciences, is not, as in Germany, obliged to pass a second examination (*Staatsexamen*) before he is admitted to practice as a doctor, lawyer, or civil engineer. His diploma of proficiency from the university entitles him to recognition on the part of the state in the profession for which his academical course has prepared him. This official patronage has proved a great benefit to the cause of higher education in Italy and has compelled a numerous class of men to pass through a course of systematic training who perhaps otherwise would have contented themselves with an easier and more superficial preparation. According to the present regulations, the medical course in all Italian universities requires six years of study and the course of law four.

As early as the beginning of the thirteenth century, the popes manifested a strong desire to get the great Italian universities under their direct supervision and control. They were jealous, especially of Bologna, where no less than 10,000 young men were then studying, and disliked to see so many wealthy young Romans repairing thither to attend lectures on secular and canonical law. Innocent III. was the first among the popes who distinctly aimed at making

his own capital a center of learning. He called famous teachers to Rome and provided a more systematic instruction to the clergy in grammar and theology. His successor, Honorius III. (1210), with the same desire to emulate Bologna, founded the so-called Palatine School of Theology in the Lateran palace, which was at that time the principal papal residence. Learning was supposed to reflect credit upon the princes or municipalities which gave its votaries shelter, and local pride was gratified by the presence of some great teacher whose very name sufficed to attract large numbers of native and foreign students. Thus the University of Padua, after 1222, rose into sudden prominence, and in 1224 the University of Naples, at present the largest and most prosperous in Italy, received its charter; many other short-lived institutions appeared and again disappeared, crushed by the competition and jealousy of their more powerful rivals. Only in Rome science was yet an exile, and secular scholarship was regarded with distrust; but the exigencies of their own position as secular rulers soon compelled the pontiffs to countenance and even to encourage certain branches of learning. The Roman *Curia* had grown to be recognized as the highest tribunal and court of appeals in Christendom, and in order to sustain its authority, it became necessary to employ none but well-trained lawyers as judges in the pope's behalf. Innocent IV. therefore introduced the study of law in the Palatine school and conceded to it the title and the privileges of a university; but its close and absolute dependence upon the pope prevented it from ever attaining the rank of a real institution of learning. It accompanied him upon his journeys, and sojourned with him wherever he might happen to hold court. Boniface VIII. possibly saw that this peripatetic existence was not conducive to sound scholarship; at all events, without entirely suspending the school, he limited its curriculum to the more strictly theological studies, and in 1303 established in its place a fixed and permanent university, which he named "The Sapienza," and which yet survives under the title of the University of Rome. It was his intention to found an institution which should be a worthy rival of Bologna and Padua, and prevent the annual emigration of young Romans to foreign cities. He therefore gave full sway to the secular sciences, and, as it appears, established no

professorships of theology, while civil and canonical law were ably represented. The number of students seems also to have been considerable, if we may judge by the fact that two officers were annually appointed whose exclusive business it was to guard them against the extortions of the Roman landlords and to collect a special tax from the latter on that part of their income which they derived from the students. The records of the early years of the Sapienza are very meager. The professors appointed by Boniface VIII. were probably picked up at random, and were not men to whose hands the future of the institution could be safely confided; moreover, their salaries were, even for those times, ridiculously small, and their dependence upon the personal favor of the pope bound their tongues and crippled their intellectual activity. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that after the death of its founder the Sapienza threatened to follow him into the grave. Its slender revenue, however, consisting of the tribute paid by the town of Tivoli and a tax levied on all foreign wines imported into Rome, sufficed to keep it nominally alive, although for many years it failed to give any evidence of active vitality.

The history of the university from this time up to the year 1870 is so closely interwoven with the history of the popes that the one cannot be related without relating the other. But as there is a great uniformity to be noticed in the regular recurrence of revival and decay, the successive chapters, extending over more than five centuries, may easily be condensed into a brief paragraph. At one time there is an amiable and easy-going pope who tolerates learning, who allows the Sapienza to enjoy its revenue and otherwise troubles himself very little about it; his successor, perhaps, is a hot-headed and ambitious man who has worldly schemes to further, and without the least scruple misappropriates the income of the university; by way of encouragement, he administers an occasional kick to it, and flings it a paltry alms when it is on the point of expiring. Ten years later, there sits, perhaps, on St. Peter's throne a pontiff who prides himself on his own learning and aspires to the title of a Mæcenas; the Sapienza again raises its head, famous scholars are called to teach in its halls, and throngs of students again fill its deserted courts and cloisters. It is evident enough, however, that a university which is so

absolutely in the power of an individual or a succession of individuals could never permanently flourish. The ever-threatening probability that the benevolent and cultivated pope might be succeeded by one of the opposite characteristics must have prevented the professors from feeling any real loyalty for and pride in the institution; they were obliged to look upon their office as a temporary one and to cultivate friendly relations with potentates or learned corporations who could provide for them when the expected catastrophe should have taken place.

The large and commodious building now occupied by the University was in process of construction for more than one hundred and fifty years, and was finally completed by Alexander VII. during the latter half of the seventeenth century. It is a quadrangular edifice in a barren Renaissance style, surmounted by a tall and curiously proportioned dome. The façade toward the street does not show to good advantage on account of its close proximity to the buildings on the other side of the narrow square; but the cool cloisters and wide, open galleries within the quadrangle have a certain stately mediæval air, and somehow recall the times when scholars were demure, long-robed men of semi-clerical demeanor. It is easy to imagine them walking two by two in the shadow of these *loggie*, discussing with ponderous acumen some gravely whimsical question, such as scholars in the old scholastic times delighted to contemplate. To my fancy the venerable building acquires an added interest, from all the questionable measures to which the pontiffs (most of whom suffered from a chronic impecuniosity) resorted in order to gain the means for completing it. Every block of stone, paid for by the sale of indulgences or by the tribute extorted from the unwilling Hebrews, has its mute, unwritten history, and the massive pillars suggest some mysterious connection with the forgotten sins of obscure, forgotten mortals who hoped to pave their way to heaven with the money they deposited in St. Peter's coffers.

Of all the pleasant corners and retreats in which the Sapienza abounds the most delightful is undoubtedly the spacious, high-ceiled library, with its long rows of white-backed books tempting you from behind their steel-wire netting. Here you can yet get a whiff of the by-gone centuries, and you are half-unconsciously surprised at the modern costumes of the young gentlemen

who sit scattered along the tables making notes and annotations from some venerable vellum-bound codex. You would rather have expected voluminous robes, square-toed shoes, and hair cut in some quaint, mediæval fashion. It is only the books which have been oblivious of the changes of time and conscientiously adhered to the style of the century which gave them birth. Here, for instance, is a Latin codex of the Bible from the twelfth century, a monument of pious zeal and patience. The initial letter of each chapter is splendidly illuminated with fantastic plants, birds, and beasts of gorgeous colors. In turning the leaves, the corners of which have been well thumbed, you can readily discover which were the favorite passages of the long-dead owner and hence draw your inferences regarding his character; for some of the pages are brown with age and wear and covered with stains (which I fondly believe are tears, shed six hundred years ago), while others are quite fresh and white. No part of the book has apparently been more diligently read than the Apocalypse, and if it be safe to judge by the blackness of the page, the chapter about the angel holding in his hand the seven vials of wrath especially has been lingered over with intense absorption. My dead scholar, whoever he was, was evidently of a sinister type and delighted in contemplating the doom that was threatening his wicked neighbor, rather than the heavenly reward which was awaiting himself and his like. Or possibly he cherished unsatisfied poetic yearnings, and merely delighted in the magnificent sound and exalted imagery of the chapter, without reference to the menacing import of its prophecies.

Among the other curious treasures of the library an illustrated natural history without text, from the seventeenth century, is worthy of notice. It is supposed that it was made by the order of Francesco Maria, first Duke of Urbino, one of whose descendants left it and a great number of other books, as a bequest, to the University. The drawings, representing quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, and fishes, are all made by hand, in some instances copied from the works of Ulysses Aldrovandi. The humble artist, whom I imagine to have been a clerk or tutor in the duke's household, was certainly gifted with a fertile imagination, and it is delightful to think of the grave credulity with which the noble company, for whose delectation these pictures were made, must have discussed the marvelous attributes of his fabulous

birds and beasts. Here we have, for instance, a *gallus cauda quadrupedis*, a cock with the tail of a quadruped; the dragon, too, *monstrum horrendum*, is portrayed with the same confidence and minute fidelity as the domestic cat and dog and cow, whose well-known characteristics do not admit of pictorial prevarication.

The library contains in all 235 MS. codices, the majority of which, however, are of small literary value. There is an abundance of illuminated breviaries, with naïve pictures of scenes from the life of Christ; moreover, flayings, roastings, crucifixions, and, in fact, all conceivable forms of martyrdom, portrayed with painful realism. Legends from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, written on beautiful vellum and bristling with miraculous incidents, fill shelf after shelf, and if they were ever read by anybody but their authors, must have appealed very much to the same taste as the dime novels do in the present day. The occasional interlarding of pious reflections hardly suffices to counteract the strongly sensational flavor of the narrative. Nevertheless, however worthless all this ecclesiastical literature may be, when artistically considered, as historical documents or as psychological manifestations from a by-gone age, it is certainly not without interest. I cannot help handling with reverence these yellow leaves of parchment containing the sacred meditations of some nameless monk, written in the most pedantic style and in a Latin which would have made Cicero shudder. If Hawthorne had been alive, I should have been tempted to send him the MS.; for I have little doubt it might be purchased. There is a soul-history here which a skillful romancer might unravel, and I suspect that it is capable of yielding rich results. The total number of books in the library is between 100,000 and 120,000.

In order to comprehend more fully what has been accomplished by the Italian government since the administration of the university passed into its hands, it is necessary to review briefly the condition of the higher instruction in Rome, during the reigns immediately preceding. When Napoleon I. had occupied Italy, he took vigorous measures for the establishment of technical and scientific institutes throughout the kingdom. His attention was also called to the Sapienza, which he supplied with more competent corps of scientific teachers; the revenues were increased and

the religious test, embodied in the oath of allegiance to the Catholic faith, was abolished. When Pius VII. and his ecclesiastical followers regained their power, they took pains to blot out completely every trace of the reforms which the conqueror had introduced. In their reactionary zeal, they came near emulating a certain king, who, when he ascended his throne after Napoleon's downfall, bade his minister re-install into his former office every man whom the usurper had dismissed. It did not occur to this good Bourbon that about one-half of his appointees were dead. Neither did the worthy Pope Pius comprehend that the footprints of a revolution are not so easily blotted out; there are always some things which never can be brought back. And even though the young men, who had been graduated during the Napoleonic interregnum were compelled to return their diplomas to have them altered, and to swear the oath of allegiance to the church; the stimulating memory of having lived amid great events, and caught glimpses of a larger horizon was not within the reach of papal decrees. The pope, being dimly aware of this, felt that some extra effort was needed to eradicate the seeds of heresy. He accordingly established a professorship of sacred physics (the very name is delightful) for the purpose of bringing science into conformity with the sacred Scriptures. The unhappy man, who accepted this responsible office, received frequent instructions from the Vatican, which was, however, then not yet infallible; and it may be owing to the latter circumstance, that the innovations resulting from this memorable union have not taken a more permanent hold, either upon the scientific or the religious world. I present here the following specimens: All natural science should be divided into six departments, corresponding to the six days of the Mosaic cosmogony. All natural phenomena must be studied in connection with the existence of God. Whether the study of astronomy is to be founded on the Book of Joshua, and anthropological investigations upon the system of Saint Thomas Aquinas is not definitely stated. It rather looks as if the Vatican, after having established a few fundamental and unerring norms, had tired of its scientific activity; for when the first incumbent of the professorship of sacred physics had sunk under the burden of his labors, the pope seems to have felt relieved at his demise; at all events he did not provide for a successor.

The reactionary policy of Pius VII. was faithfully adhered to by Gregory XVI. and Pius IX. The former was fortunately less aggressive in matters of education than most of his predecessors, and allowed the Sapienza to vegetate in a state of peaceful piety and ignorance. Pius IX., after his brief flirtation with liberalism in 1848, had an unhappy ambition to purge the institution of all dangerous elements, and, as might have been expected, succeeded in purging away whatever talent there was left in the faculty and in filling the chairs thus vacated with intellectual nullities of unquestioned loyalty. The Sapienza became a purely political institution,—a kind of hospital for the intellectually infirm who had grown gray in the service of the church. It was, under such circumstances, a difficult matter to arrange the government and the curriculum of the medical school, which was regarded as a branch of the university; but the Jesuitical advisers of the pope were equal to the emergency. In the first place, everything which savored of unregenerate science was carefully removed. The students studied anatomy not from the human corpse, because that might offend their modesty, but from wax models and colored drawings, from which the offensive element was eliminated. Hundreds of doctors and surgeons, most of whom had never smelt blood, far less assisted at a hospital, were thus sent out, armed with a diploma, to prey upon their unsuspecting fellow-men.

It might be questioned whether there was any need at all of physicians in a country where the church was so fully competent to cure ailments of the body as well as those of the soul; where prayers to Saint Leonhard were the approved remedy against typhus fever; where Saint Blasius was warranted to cure diphtheria, and Saint Lucia took precedence before the oculist. There was a time when the Vatican declared that consulting a physician was an impious interference with the ways of Providence; that disease was the just retribution of sin, and that as long as man sinned he ought to suffer. But the stern logic of this argument some of the popes found themselves unable to sustain. The chief difficulty with them was the division of the functions of healing between the saint and the physician. Since experience had proved that the saints were not utterly averse to curing people who had already resorted to worldly science, it was thought safe to have a compromise concluded, according to which the physician

should apply the remedies, but the cure should be ascribed solely to the intervention of the saint. The papal physician was therefore obliged to refer his patient, in every critical case, to his father confessor, who seldom failed to rob the earthly leech of whatever credit there might be due to him.

After the conquest of Rome by the Italians in 1870, the priests lost all direct influence in the management of the Sapienza. By a law of January 26, 1873, the theological faculty was abolished in all the universities of the kingdom and (this is highly characteristic of the policy of the Italian government) those of the theological professors who possessed literary or philosophical accomplishments were transferred to the faculty of philosophy and letters. It is needless to say that this latter paragraph was intended to conciliate those who, on account of their sympathy with the Vatican, were expected to condemn the measure. The result was that the University has been and is at the present time burdened with a number of teachers who are miserably unfit for their positions—men who have openly sworn allegiance to the government for the sake of the salary which they could not afford to lose, and secretly hate it, and, perhaps, even plot against it.

It is not very long since the project of founding a great national university in Washington was agitated among us, and I believe even advocated in a presidential message. Let those who look hopefully toward the realization of such an idea cast a glance at the history of the Italian universities, and especially of the Sapienza at Rome, and they will gain a vivid notion of what a political university is, and in the present state of the world necessarily must be. In the first place Italy has now twenty-one universities, which is about fifteen more than there is any need of. Every minister acknowledges abstractly that it would be an excellent thing if all these superfluous institutions could be swept out of existence; but where is the man in public life who would stake his popularity on such a utopian scheme? Each town is determined to maintain its traditional rights and privileges among which it counts the support of its university from the public treasury, and woe to the representative in parliament who dares to molest "local interests." The whole Italian parliament is a loose conglomeration of people, each of which is the mouth-piece of some local interest. No one seems as

yet to have learned that the united country, as such, has also its interests which must take precedence of those of Sassari or Siena or Catania. And yet when in the year 1860 some one had the courage to move and to carry the suppression of the University of Sassari (a pitiful little school with twenty-seven professors and between fifty and seventy students) such a tumult was raised that the ministry was obliged to have the vote reconsidered, and the suspended institution was by law of July 5th, of the same year, triumphantly re-established.

According to the statistical tables, published by the government, there was in the scholastic year 1870-71 a total number of 11,622 students and 810 professors in all Italian universities, including the four municipal ones (Camerino, Ferrara, Perugia and Urbino) which derive no revenue from the state. In the year 1875-76 the number of students had fallen to 8,894, while that of the professors of course remained the same. Since then no complete statistics of instruction have been published; and it is difficult to determine whether the number has since been still further reduced. The reduction is chiefly owing to the fact that the standard of admission has been uniformly raised, and a large class of aristocratic idlers, who do not choose to submit to the changed requirements, have thus been cut off. Moreover, the University of Naples, which formerly dispensed entirely with an entrance examination and did not even require matriculation, has recently been compelled to accept the regulations governing the other universities of the realm, and its attendance has accordingly diminished from 4,102 to 2,543. The law prescribes that before he can be matriculated in a university, the student shall have acquitted himself creditably at the *Abiturienten examen* from the gymnasium, or rather from the lyceum (which is the name given to the three upper classes of what in Germany is called a gymnasium).

But to return to the Sapienza in Rome. I have already intimated that its reorganization by the present government has not by any means been as radical as might have been desired, and that political motives frequently govern the ministry in filling its professorships. It is not only the occult, unexpressed regard for the Vatican which exerts an unwholesome influence in this respect; every premier has, as a rule, a number of faithful adherents, who are only

too ready to inflict themselves upon any institution which is dependent upon the bounty of the state, and it is the unhappy lot of the Roman University to be in high favor with the unemployed geniuses of this class. If there are no vacancies, some friend of the ministry, commanding for the moment a parliamentary majority, moves the establishment of a new professorship, usually in some obscure or semi-fantastic study, which suits the tastes of the intended appointee, and a patriotic oration, explaining the importance of the measure to humanity and to science, seldom fails to produce the required number of votes. Thus the Roman University boasted, in 1871, a professorship of "the philosophy of statistics," and another of "practical philosophy," not to speak of comparatively rational chairs, as "the philosophy of history" and "the history of philosophy"; but a chair of philosophy, pure and simple, *i. e.* logic and ethics, did not at that time exist. Judging by the *Annuario* for 1878-79 some of these superfluous professorships have now been abolished, and others, hardly less superfluous, probably established for the benefit of adherents of another ministry, have taken their place. Thus I find the name of a gentleman who teaches "the comparative history of the Neo-Latin languages and literatures"; it would be interesting to know how many students there are among the 648 now attending the Sapienza who cherish an unsatisfied curiosity regarding the Neo-Latin languages and literatures. Again, the university offers instruction in "Latin and Italian grammar and lexicography"; and this, be it understood, is taught apart from the Latin literature, which constitutes another independent professorship.

At almost every higher institution of learning throughout the German empire, the German grammar is annually made the subject of a most interesting course of lectures. The development of every grammatical peculiarity of the Teutonic languages is traced from the Sanscrit down through Gothic, old high German, middle high German, etc., and the etymological relationship between the modern tongues of Gothic origin is clearly demonstrated. I doubt if any Roman professor would venture to penetrate as deeply into the history of his own language; but elementary instruction, I find, is the rule in nearly every department of learning which has no direct application to practical uses. Thus there is

in the Sapienza a chair of geography—a science which with us is apt to be relegated to the grammar school. In the faculties of the schools of medicine and of law, there are many excellent specialists whose teaching is clear and logical; moreover, during the last years, the cabinets and museums have received many valuable additions, and much apparatus has been procured for physical experiments and laboratory uses. It is easy to comprehend why these special schools should have escaped comparatively the baneful influence of politics, for you may appoint an ignoramus professor of "the history of statistics" or of "the philosophy of history," and the chances are that he will astonish his students by his fluency and eloquence; but if you appoint him professor of chemistry, or Roman law, or anatomy, you will place him in an embarrassing position by compelling him to unmask his ignorance.

In its organization the Roman University presents a curious mixture of the two systems known as the English and the German. The faculty of philosophy and letters is meant approximately to embody the mediæval idea of the *universitas literarum* whose object is general culture without special reference to the vocation which the student may choose in after life. According to the *Annuario* for 1878-79, only twenty-three students are at present matriculated in this course, or about $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the total number. The other courses, of which no less than fourteen are specified in the catalogue, are all of a practical character and are obviously intended to educate officials and professional men for the service of the state. One course, that of philosophy, is difficult to describe, and no one of the professors whom I have questioned on the subject seem to know exactly what its character was originally meant to be; but as it has at present not a single student, and evidently ought to be classed as a mere subdivision of the course of philosophy and letters, it is not of any particular consequence to know why or how it came to be established as a separate discipline. There are a dozen other points in the *Annuario* which would be likely to puzzle the uninitiated, and concerning which but very unsatisfactory information can be obtained from those who might be supposed to know. Thus there is one course in chemistry and pharmacology which, judging by the fact that no one is studying in it, is obviously superfluous, and another in phar-

macology in which twenty-six students are inscribed. Even midwifery, or, as the course is called, obstetrics for midwives, is awarded a place within the hospitable walls of the university; and two separate courses are provided for notaries and attorneys (*procuratori*) apart from the school of jurisprudence or law. This latter enigma, however, is explained by the fact that the Italian notaries, occupying a position corresponding to that of our justices of the peace, probably do not require the same proficiency in legal lore as the regular lawyers (*avvocato, giurista*). The school of law has, during the last decade, become the most flourishing branch of the Sapienza, and has at present 258 students; next comes the medical school with 150, and third the school of engineering, with 60 matriculates.

It is interesting to observe in the Italian system of public instruction the radical and far-reaching effects of the great political events which, between the years of 1848 and 1870, gradually brought about the reunion of the nation. Previous to 1848, and, indeed, during the whole following decade after the return of Pius IX. from his brief exile, the Italians were intellectually under the absolute dominion of France. Their chief source of culture, outside of their own great poets, whom they praised but seldom read, was the yellow-covered literature which poured in so abundantly from the Parisian presses. The literary events in France were discussed in the Roman *salons* no less eagerly than in those of Paris, and Châteaubriand, Lamartine, and all the other French celebrities of the first half of the century could count on their Italian public with no less certainty than on their own countrymen. The cultivated Italian of that time had entirely appropriated the comfortable *chauvinisme* of his Gallic neighbor, and believed with all his soul that nothing worthy of his attention could come from the northern side of the Alps. England and Germany were to him remote and barbaric lands, whose literatures could only be treated with compassionate scorn. The principal educational institutions of Italy were then modeled after the French pattern, and the Sapienza and the Collegio Romano were both feeble imitations of the Sorbonne at Paris. Popular instruction was left to take care of itself, and ignorance and superstition flourished with an incredible vitality. The combined policy of Pius IX. and Napoleon III., however, soon destroyed this intellectual loyalty to France,

and when in 1859 liberty of the press was introduced (except in Rome and Venice), English and German books began to find their way into the Italian market. The hatred of the Napoleonic zouaves who by force upheld the tottering thrones of the Pope and the detested Bourbon in Naples was gradually transferred to French literature and manufacturers, and, in fact, to everything French except the fashion-plates. The universal sentiment of the nation, outside of the clerical party, made it impossible for the government to maintain the traditional alliance with France, and when, in 1866, the Austrians were finally compelled to release their grip on Venice and Lombardy, there was no further obstacle to a friendly relation with the Germans. The German language is now studied in the Italian gymnasia and technical schools, and many reforms have been introduced which have been borrowed from the admirable Prussian system. These reforms, to be sure, have in many instances been hasty and ill-advised, but the fact is nevertheless significant that Italy has at last come into vital contact with the rest of the civilized world and has begun to appropriate the results of the experience of other nations. The book-trade, which during the papal reign was in an antediluvian condition, has kept pace with the progress in other directions, and the whole European world of thought is, through this channel, made accessible to every one who is capable of entering into it. English, French, and German books are now exhibited in friendly juxtaposition in the windows of the book-sellers in the Corso and the Piazza di Spagna, and the circulating libraries are stocked with a veritable Babylonian confusion of tongues.

In the University of Rome, I am forced to admit, many traces of the French *régime* are still perceptible. The Roman professor, as a rule, is terribly rhetorical, and frequently bombastic. On entering the room, he is often received with loud applause. He opens his oration (for it can hardly be called a lecture) with a few elegant, sometimes half-apologetic, generalities, and then proceeds to gesticulate and to shout at the top of his voice. The clearness, the accuracy, and the exact adaptation of the phrase to the fact, which characterize the lectures of the best German professors, would send an Italian audience to sleep. The students, as well as the other loungers who are apt to drop in, especially during lectures delivered in the afternoon, expect to be amused, and they

demand, first of all, a piquant and entertaining delivery. Ladies are also admitted, and—as I learn from a German authority—expended formerly a vast amount of enthusiasm on the philosophy of Count Mamiani, whom the Teutons smile at as an amiable *dilettante*. But the ladies found his philosophical discourses interesting and amusing. The ex-minister Ruggero Bonghi's lectures on ancient history enjoyed a similar popularity among the outside public. But he, like so many others, has been drawn into the political Charybdis, and his name now figures in the *Annuario* with mere decorative intent. He has twice been minister of public instruction, and in that capacity has made himself responsible for a great deal of well-meant, but unprofitable, educational legislation. He is, however, a man of great culture, a most agreeable talker, and a voluminous author. One is fairly appalled at the number of books he has published, on political, æsthetic, historical, and philosophical subjects. To the Italian mind (of his own party) he is *lucido, profondo, and even stupendo*; but a foreigner soon learns to estimate these epithets at their real value, when he hears how indiscriminately they are applied. Italy is teeming with *uomini dotti and stupendi* whose reputations rarely extend beyond the precincts of their own city. At an early stage of one's sojourn on classical soil, he learns that the Italians are most unscrupulous praisers. I do not wish to imply that Professor Bonghi may not be deserving of praise; but, after having read two of his books ("Saggi e Discorsi" and "Ritratti Contemporanei") I venture to suggest that some disproportion exists between his reputation and his actual merits.

Nominally, there is absolute liberty of expression at the Italian universities; practically, the liberty of expression is very limited. The possibility of a reconciliation with the Vatican hangs like a threatening cloud over every academic *cathedra*; and the minister, who always desires to leave a path open for such a reconciliation, binds the tongue of every teacher who might be disposed to utter a daring thought. Thus, a few years ago, a very excellent and scholarly professor (one of the very few to whom such adjectives could be applied) undertook to lecture on the Rig Veda; and, without going out of his way to draw parallels, could not well avoid showing that there were passages and incidents in the Hindoo scriptures which recalled the Bible. Immediately the minister of public instruction rent his clothes

—metaphorically speaking—and tore his hair. What would they say in the Vatican when they heard of this impiety? How would it be possible to conciliate the Holy Father, after having permitted the Roman youth to listen to such ungodly language? You would have supposed, then, that an open circular letter was dispatched to the universities of the kingdom forbidding unscriptural teaching, or rather teaching that might seem to conflict with the Catholic religion. Far from it; such a course would have alienated the radicals, whose support was also well worth having. Accordingly, a notice was *secretly* sent to the professor, warning him to be, in the future, more cautious, and to keep his heretical opinions to himself. The learned gentleman turned in despair to the sacred writings of the Persians, and, if I am not misinformed, repeated his former blunder. Thereupon the minister, to whom it was of primary importance to keep him quiet, *sans cérémonie* changed his professorship into something vague and general, which would, however, prevent him from lecturing on his favorite topics, in the study of which he had spent his whole previous life.

Among the celebrated men who in the past centuries have taught in the halls of the Sapienza, no one is more worthy of remembrance than Copernicus. During the years of his foreign pilgrimages, while he was engaged in the astronomical and mathematical studies which brought law and order into the universal chaos, he also came to Rome, and was persuaded to accept a professorship of mathematics. Beyond the fact that he remained in this position for five years (1500–1505) nothing is known about his pedagogical activity. A number of the instruments which he used in his experiments and a few of his books are said to be in the possession of a gentleman now residing in Rome, and they have lately been offered to the university as the foundation of a Copernican Museum; but the conditions attached to the gift are such that the authorities hesitate to accept it. They have, however, honored the memory of the great astronomer with a mural tablet of marble, recording his virtues and accomplishments in a Latin inscription, bristling with laudatory superlatives.

The renowned humanist, Pico della Mirandola, who visited Rome in 1486, was never officially connected with the Sapienza; but the stir which his presence created, both in learned and in religious circles, could not fail to stimulate the drowsy routine of aca-

demic instruction. Pico's mission, according to his own statement, was to reconcile Platonic philosophy with Catholic orthodoxy, and with this purpose he offered to defend in public nine hundred theses of the most miscellaneous character, embracing the whole volume of human knowledge, according to the mediæval standard. The fame of his learning, however, was so great that no one ventured to meet him in the public arena, and he returned to Florence with a confirmed belief in his own invincibility.

During the three centuries that intervened between the return of Copernicus to Germany and the accession of Pius IX. to St. Peter's chair, no really great name appears in the annals of the Sapienza; although this pope, as is well known, cherished a conscientious preference for pious mediocrity, he did not escape, in one instance, appointing a man of genius to a professorship in his university. In the case of Padre Angelo Secchi, however, the priestly garment and his membership in the Society of Jesus were probably held to be sufficient safeguards against scientific heresies. A little incident which occurred during my later visit to Rome, throws light upon Padre Secchi's position. The padre was explaining how he had come to invent his machine for registering astronomical observations; it was dire necessity, he said, which had stimulated his imagination, for he could never get an assistant who had sufficient mathematical training to be of any use. His visitor expressed great surprise at this; he would have supposed that a Jesuit, with his powerful society to support him in whatever he undertook, would have unlimited resources. The kindly old priest smiled knowingly at this remark, and after a little meditative pause qualified his previous statement by saying that, of course, he could get assistants enough, but as soon as he had taught them something and they began to be useful to him, they were promptly removed and fresh ignoramuses were sent to supply their places. No one was permitted to remain longer than a year. These revelations led my friend to the conclusion that both Padre Secchi himself and his science were regarded with distrust by his spiritual superiors. When the Italian government assumed the reins of power, it naturally desired to have the great astronomer continue his connection with the university; but as a member of the Jesuit society, he could not very well swear the oath of allegiance, and therefore voluntarily resigned. In spite of this,

the use of the observatory on the Capitol was granted him to the day of his death.

Among the present members of the Roman faculty there is hardly one whose reputation extends beyond the boundary of his own country. Count Mamiani, whose political career has secured him a prominent place in Italian history, has not lectured for several years, and has now definitely resigned his professorship. He was born in the year 1800, and spent his early years in philosophical and literary studies. In 1831, when Gregory XVI. was elected pope, he became known as a zealous promoter of the revolution, and was elected a member of the provisional government at Bologna. The Austrian army, hastening to the support of the Holy Father, soon crushed the patriotic movement, and Mamiani was obliged to save his life by flight. For fourteen years he lived in Paris, publishing from time to time poems and essays on patriotic and philosophical subjects. During this period, Mazzini and his adherents made frequent efforts to win him for their cause, but Mamiani, disapproving of their secret and underhand methods, held rigidly aloof. His experience had convinced him that the republic in Italy meant anarchy, and that, for some centuries to come, the constitutional monarchy would offer the best opportunities for the development of the nation and its gradual training for self-government. In 1846, Mamiani refused to avail himself of the amnesty offered by Pius IX., because he did not choose to be classed under the head of "political offenders." He had nothing to regret, and was too proud to stigmatize his own past by accepting a pardon. But Charles Albert, Victor Emmanuel's father, who had a sincere admiration for the ardent patriot, ordered his ambassador in Paris to sign his passport, and thus enabled him to return to his country.

My space forbids me to give anything but the briefest possible review of the remainder of Mamiani's varied career. In 1848, he was the most conspicuous member of the liberal ministry of Pius IX., and in this capacity had to suffer for the illiberality and inconsistency of the pope himself and his clerical colleagues. He was then again forced to flee, accepted citizenship in the kingdom of the Sardinias, and became member of parliament from Genoa, and later, minister of public instruction. Since the establishment of the kingdom of Italy, he has occupied various positions of public trust, and has helped to give stability to

several of Victor Emmanuel's short-lived cabinets.

Personally, Count Mamiani is one of the most delightful embodiments of the type known as "the gentleman of the old school." The elaborate courtesy of his demeanor, his polished and gracious manners, and his finished and elegant conversation (contrasting so strikingly with the slipshod and haphazard discourse of our own contemporaries), recall the time when conversation was a fine art, and gentlemen studied demeanor as they did mathematics and Latin grammar. In the count's dress, too, one perceives a regretful abandonment of the picturesqueness of former times, and reluctant concessions to the changing whims of modern fashion. On the evening of my first visit he wore ruffles, and I imagined for a moment that I was sitting in a French *salon* of the last century, and thought of the powdered cavaliers, so fastidious in their dress, and so dainty in their manners, who yet hid a heart of steel under their embroidered waistcoats, and could die bravely at the call of duty and honor.

One of the best and most entertaining lecturers in the University of Rome is Fabio Nannarelli, professor of Italian literature and author of several volumes of poems and æsthetic essays. His delivery is simple and quiet, and he evidently shuns that noisy declamation upon which so many of his colleagues rely for their popularity. In those of his lectures to which I listened there was a strong preponderance of the biographical over the critical element. He endeavoured to evolve a poet's works from his life and surroundings, and to place his individuality vividly before his hearers. He quoted copiously, and as the Italian language, with its rolling rhythm and its rich sonorous harmonies, sounds wondrously well in verse, it was a pleasure to listen.

Before concluding, it may be necessary to add that the university is at the present time passing through a severe crisis. It is a notorious fact that almost every Italian minister is sure, during his brief term of office, to make some insane stroke for popularity. A minister who does not attempt some radical change of some sort, is looked upon both by his enemies and his own partisans as a weak, incompetent man. No one has the faintest respect for the laws and decrees, prepared and passed by the efforts of his predecessor; the more critical his attitude toward these, the more attention

he is apt to attract for the moment, and the more profound grows the public conviction that he is a *uomo stupendo*—"a devil of a fellow." Mr. De Sanctis, late minister of public instruction, acted apparently on some such principle. After having probably cudgelled his brains in vain in order to invent some destructive scheme, he hit upon the unhappy idea of dismembering the University of Rome, *i. e.*, to divide it into a series of autonomous scientific institutes. First, the school of engineering, constituting hitherto an integral part of the university, was by a royal decree made directly dependent upon the ministry, and the previous dean of the faculty of engineering became an independent rector who could henceforth communicate directly with the government without the intervention of the rector of the university. Secondly, an autonomous school of archæology was founded also by royal decree, and a committee appointed to arrange its course of instruction; but just then the ministry Cairoli was forced to resign, and Coppino, the new minister of public instruction, was in honor bound to disapprove of the wild plottings of his predecessor. Nevertheless his arguments are very sound, and every sensible man, who wishes the university well, must agree with him. The faculty has just had a meeting, in which it protested strongly against the innovations, proposed and partly carried out by De Sanctis. It is plain enough that one or perhaps two professorships of archæology in the university would serve the purpose quite as well as a separate school; and it would be incomparably cheaper, a consideration which, in the present state of Italian finances, must be an important factor in every benevolent speculation. The presumptive nominees for professorships in the archæological institute are of course fired with patriotic zeal for the advancement of learning and all that, and cry out against the sordid policy of the new ministry. I have just had a long discussion with one of these patriots, and left him with a dim sense that the very existence of the kingdom of Italy depends upon the establishment of the school of archæology.

At the present writing (February, 1879), the ministry Depretis is exerting itself to counteract the harmful effect of the De Sanctis decrees and to place the university on a firmer footing. Let us sincerely hope that its efforts may not prove unavailing.