

## MEDIÆVAL UNIVERSITY LIFE.

1. *Die Entstehung der Universitäten des Mittelalters bis 1400.* Von P. Heinrich Denifle, aus dem Predigerorden, Unterarchivar des Hl. Stuhles. Berlin. 1885.
2. *De l'Organisation de l'Enseignement dans l'Université de Paris au Moyen Age.* Par Charles Thurot. Paris. 1850.
3. *Essai sur l'Organisation des Etudes dans l'Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs au XIIIème et au XIVème Siècle (1216-1342).* Par G. Douais. Paris. 1884.
4. *Monumenta Franciscana.* 2 vols. Rolls Series. Vol. i. edited by J. S. Brewer, London, 1858; vol. ii. edited by Richard Howlett, 1882.

FATHER Denifle's book on the origins of the universities is epoch-making. The learned Dominican, as sub-archivist of the Vatican library, has utilized to their full extent the rare and exceptional advantages at his disposal. To the extensive materials that lay at his hand he brought to bear vast learning and marvellous patience. No document seems to have escaped him; he allows nothing in the document that he handles to pass unchallenged. He has an eye for the most minute details. Indeed, it is in grasping the whole meaning of a phrase or sentence that he has been enabled to correct so many illusions in which the historians of all our universities have been living. His method is purely analytical. He leaves very little to inference. He makes no statement that is not based on a document, or that is not backed up by ample proof. His familiarity with the literature of the subject of universities in all its details enables him to go behind the polish of the sentence and lay finger upon the very text that the author had in mind when stating his propositions. He forthwith discusses and settles the authoritative value of the work drawn from. This is the perfection of critical acumen. And inasmuch as our historians of universities have been living in a fool's paradise concerning the origin and formation of those institutions, Father Denifle has his hands full in correcting, refuting, rejecting, and discussing the statements of his predecessors. His book in every page bristles with argument. It is a book that shall henceforth be indispensable to the student of history. No man can ignore it and presume to write upon mediæval times. The three agencies that moulded the Middle Ages into their characteristic shape and gave them life and being were the Papacy, the

Holy Roman Empire, and the University of Paris. Each wielded a far-reaching influence the full extent of which few historians have been able to measure. Therefore do we most cordially thank Father Denifle for the scholarly volume he has given us, and we hope and pray that he be spared the health and strength to finish the other volumes that are to follow.

Prior to Father Denifle's great book the only work that attempted to remove the history of the University of Paris out of the domain of romance in which DuBoulay had placed it was the slender volume of M. Charles Thurot. Every student of education since 1850 has found the book invaluable in giving him for the first time a correct notion of the organization of the University of Paris. Even the search-light of Father Denifle's acumen, while pointing out a mistake here and there, approves of the main conclusions of the author. When Thurot went astray he was generally misled by placing too great confidence in DuBoulay. M. l'Abbé Douais did for the Dominicans what Thurot did for the University of Paris. He for the first time mapped out for the general reader the whole complex organization of study under which the Dominicans passed. His book is a valuable contribution to the history of pedagogics. It is largely based upon original documents. The book is timely, for men are now beginning to appreciate the influence of the mendicant orders upon the Middle Ages. In like manner, the "*Monumenta Franciscana*" gives us insight into the foundations of the Franciscans in London and Oxford. The first volume includes the chronicle of Thomas Eccleston, the letters of Adam Marsh, and a short register of the Minorites in London. The second volume contains a fragment of Thomas Eccleston's treatise on the advent of the friars, the rule of St. Francis, the statutes of the observant Franciscans and other valuable records bearing upon the order. Noteworthy is the respectful tone in which the introductions to these volumes are written by the late Professor Brewer and Mr. Richard Howlett. These writers were not Catholic, but no Catholic could be more zealous in defending the practises and customs of the friars; none could be more considerate in making allowance for time and place.

Father Denifle is outspoken in his denunciation of the synthetic method as applied to history. He must be analytical or nothing. He is convinced that naught but unsatisfactory results can be reached by the synthetic method.<sup>1</sup> But we should distinguish. For purposes of investigation and verification, the analytical is the only proper method; but results having been reached, there is always place for the synthetic method. The material having been

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<sup>1</sup> *Einleitung*, xxiii.

tested, it may be safely employed to build up with. Therefore, under leave of Father Denifle, we shall make a short study of school-life in the mediæval universities, in the course of which we shall attempt to reconstruct that life as contemporaries reveal it, and as it appears to our view. We shall first consider the organization of a university.

### I.

The oldest mediæval universities of which we have cognizance are those of Paris and Bologna. The origin of each is buried in the mists of the past. Bologna became famous as a school of law; students flocked thither from all parts; in the course of time it possessed an autonomy of its own. Pope and emperor endowed it with certain rights and privileges, and forthwith it loomed before us as a great university. So it was with the university of Paris. For half a century before it became recognized as such, we find it to have been a great intellectual centre, made famous by the brilliant teachings of William of Champeaux, Abelard and Peter Lombard. The masters became organized into a scholastic guild. But the university can be traced to no one school, or no combination of schools as its source.<sup>1</sup> The teachers of that day supplied an educational want; the schools of Paris thus became centres of instruction which grew apace with the concourse of students and teachers. "They had practical ends," says Laurie; "their aim was to minister to the immediate needs of society. . . . They simply aimed at critically expounding recognized authorities in the interest of social wants. It was the needs of the human body which originated Salerno, it was the needs of men as related to each other in a civil organism which originated Bologna; it was the eternal needs of the human spirit in its relation to the unseen that originated Paris. We may say, then, that it was the improvement of the profession of medicine, law and theology which led to the inception and organization of the first great schools."<sup>2</sup> To the inception, perhaps, yes; to the organization, decidedly no. The university of Paris was not organized from the schools of St. Victor's, or St. Genevieve's, or any combination of these with other schools. There is extant no record of a definite act by which one might say, "Here is the charter of incorporation; here is the decree of organization." The guild spirit was abroad and permeated all trades and professions. The masters were no exception. When their guild looms into prominence, it receives recognition; but it is only by decree of pope or emperor—and of pope chiefly—that its degrees become entitled to universal respect. Thus, long

<sup>1</sup> This point has been settled forever by F. Denifle, *Entstehung der Universitäten*, pp. 655 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Rise and Constitution of Universities*, pp. 109, 110.

after the guild of masters in Paris had become recognized, it remained under the jurisdiction of the chancellor of the cathedral of Notre Dame. It was out of the struggle between the chancellor and the masters that the university grew into a corporate existence.

The chancellor of Notre Dame had been an important factor in educational matters up to the beginning of the twelfth century. He held absolute sway over the students of all Paris; he dispensed licenses; he was the students' civil and religious judge; he had the power of excommunication.<sup>1</sup> He became high-handed and abused his power. He exacted exorbitant fines; he had a dungeon of his own, and imprisoned arbitrarily. The popes and their legates, in order to diminish this power, granted various privileges to students and masters. Thus Innocent III., who had been himself a student in Paris, and had been witness of the chancellor's tyranny and of the long train of evils that followed in its wake, legislated in order to break it down. In 1208 he authorized the teachers to be represented by a syndic; in 1209 he bestowed upon them the right to take oath to observe such rules as they deemed proper and useful to impose upon themselves as a body. In 1213, he restricted the chancellor's judicial powers by forbidding him to refuse a license to teach, to anybody recommended by the masters. This act is regarded as the charter of the university.<sup>2</sup> In this manner did His Holiness constitute masters and students into a true corporation. Six years later—in 1219—Pope Honorius III., forbade the chancellor to excommunicate masters and students in a body without the authorization of the Holy See.<sup>3</sup> The kings of France was no less generous in the privileges and prerogatives that they granted the masters and students of Paris. All this legislation fostered the growth of the university while it crippled the authority of the chancellor. But the death-blow was given to that authority when the masters and students abandoned the shadow of the cathedral and flocking to the left bank of the Seine, found refuge in the dependencies of the abbeys of St. Genevieve and St. Victor. In 1213 no school belonging to the university stood outside the island of the city.<sup>4</sup> In 1215, the papal legate, Robert de Courçon regulated in regard to the study of theology that no one should teach it who was not thirty-five years old, who had not devoted at least eight years to study in the schools, and who had not in addition attended a theological course of five years.<sup>5</sup> This shows that Paris had already a

<sup>1</sup> Bulæus, *Hist. Univ. Paris.*, vol. iii., p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Thurot, *De l'Organisation de l'Université*, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Not *any member* of the university, as Thurot puts it.—*De l'Organisation*, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Denifle, *Die Entstehung der Universitäten*, p. 662.

<sup>5</sup> Bulæus, vol. i., p. 82. Thurot mistook the reading of this text in his essay.

school of theology and that dialectics were regarded as simply a preparation for the higher branch. In 1216, the first year of the papacy of Honorius III., who took an abiding interest in the rising university, a school was opened under the jurisdiction of the chancellor of St. Genevieve's. The chancellor of the cathedral regarded this as an encroachment upon his rights, and refused to regard as valid any license or diploma signed by the chancellor of St. Genevieve's. The quarrel was settled by Pope Honorius III., in a brief to the bishop and chancellor of Paris, in which it was ordered that any licentiate of the chancellor of St. Genevieve's be admitted to teach upon the same footing with a licentiate of the chancellor of Notre Dame. This gave new impetus to the schools on the left bank of the Seine. Students continued to flock thither. Between 1219 and 1222 the largest exodus to Mount St. Genevieve took place. About 1227 the schools of theology and law were transferred to the same side. Thenceforth the abbot of St. Genevieve's assumed a certain amount of jurisdiction over the university, and finally the chancellor of St. Genevieve's shared the administration with the chancellor of Notre Dame and the rector of the four nations. Thus was the University of Paris—the Latin Quarter—cradled on the island beneath the shadow of Notre Dame. Thus did it grow into a corporate existence out of the struggles of the masters to rid themselves of the thralldom of the chancellor.

Once only did the papacy fail in sustaining the university in this struggle. The incident will throw light upon mediæval university life. About 1221 the university had a seal engraved as the essential attribute of its corporate autonomy. The chapter of Notre Dame took umbrage at this act as a novelty not to be tolerated and brought the case before the papal legate then residing in Paris. The legate placed an injunction upon any further use of the seal until the case should have been properly tried and decided. Before the decision was arrived at, the seal was used, and in 1225 the legate decided in favor of the chapter of Notre Dame, broke the seal and forbade, under penalty of excommunication, the formation of another. This decision raised a storm. The scholars and masters rose up as one body; they besieged the house in which the legate dwelt, and caused him to flee to some place of safety. It was only in 1246 that the university afterwards obtained from Pope Innocent IV. the right of holding and using a seal. In the meantime the four nations had each its seal, and any document requiring the sanction of the whole university was stamped with the four seals conjointly. While examining these seals in the beautiful volume of Vallet de Viriville we are reminded that the patrons

of the university were the Blessed Virgin, St. Catherine, St. Nicholas and St. Andrew.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking of the four nations reminds us of the fact that they, no more than the pre-existent schools, were the elements out of which the university was directly formed. They came after that formation. The university grew simply out of the association of the professors of the four disciplines: theology, law, medicine and arts.<sup>2</sup> The four nations were so many guilds modelled after the Saxon guilds of an earlier age. The division was more artificial than spontaneous. It grew out of the peculiar relation of things in the Middle Ages. Youths flocking to a centre of learning from all parts of the world found themselves among strangers, exposed to every kind of imposition. Until it was otherwise legislated for and even thereafter these youths were charged exorbitant prices for lodging, board, books, service, clothing. True, the university from the hour of its inception undertook to protect the students against the exactions of the townspeople. Thus, the price of lodgings was to be fixed by sworn arbitrators, half appointed by the town and half by the city;<sup>3</sup> but there were many other things in regard to which the students required protection, and of which the university could not or would not take cognizance. Hence the necessity of their forming themselves into associations for mutual protection. The natural division was according to nations and provinces. Oxford had two nations, the North and the South; the students of Bologna were divided into Transalpine and Cisalpine; those of Paris were divided into four nations. The last-named were organized somewhere about 1219. They were composed of all the scholars included in the licentiate, together with the Masters of Arts.<sup>4</sup> The four nations were known as the French, which included the Italian, Spanish and Greek students; the Picardians, which included the students of the northeast and the Netherlands; the Normans and the English, which included those of Ireland, Scotland and Germany. Later on, we find the Franciscan students in the university so numerous that for convenience sake they were divided into nations. Such a division was well calculated to bring about a simplification of general management and superintendence. Each of the four nations had its own hall and its own rights and privileges as a corporate body. It had its procurator, and, as has already been remarked, its seal distinct from that of the university, its common purse, its patron saint and its Masses.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the images of those saints on the first seals in *Histoire de l'Instruction Publique en Europe*, pp. 129-135.

<sup>2</sup> Denifle, *Entstehung*, p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> *Story of the University of Edinburgh*, by Sir A. Grant, i., p. 5. Gregory IX. obtained this concession from Louis IX. in 1244.

<sup>4</sup> Denifle, *Entstehung*, p. 131.

<sup>5</sup> Thurot: *De l'Organisation de l'Enseignement*, p. 22.

Members were addressed according to the nation under which they were enrolled. Those of the French nation as *Honoranda Natio Franciæ, Gallorum* or *Gallicanæ*; those of Picardy as *Fidelissima Picardorum*, or *Picardica*: those of Normandy as *Veneranda Normanorum* or *Normaniæ*; and those of Germany as *Constantissima Germanorum*, or *Allemaniæ Natio*.<sup>1</sup> In consequence of the wars between England and France antipathy to England was shown at an early stage of the university by expunging that name and substituting Germany instead. The national spirit waxed strong with the growth of each organization. Party spirit ran high among the nations. Public festivities were frequently occasions for public rioting. Each nation vied with the other in celebrating the feast day of its patron saints, with the religious solemnities of which were mixed up the most worldly and profane rejoicings. They were made the occasion of illuminations, masquerading, balls and cavalcades. As each nation sought to excel in display, members of the other nations endeavored to spoil the celebration. They were attacked while walking in procession. A decree of Oxford University prohibited the nations from going to church or to the public places in a body, dancing or shouting with masks over their faces, or to march anywhere with garlands of leaves or flowers on their heads under penalty of excommunication, and if persisted in, of imprisonment.<sup>2</sup> Not only did each nation seek to rival the others in pomp and show, but each to a certain degree despised the others, and attacked thereto a nickname of opprobrium that was considered characteristic. The Englishman was a drunkard and a leech; the Frenchman was proud, effeminate and decked out like a woman; the German, furious and obscene; the Norman, vain and boastful; the Poitevin a traitor and a spendthrift; the Burgundian, stupid and brutal; the Breton, light and changing; the Lombard, miserly, cowardly and avaricious; the Roman, seditious, violent, and quick at blows; the Sicilian, cruel and tyrannical; the Brabantine, a man of blood, an incendiary, a brigand; the Fleming, a glutton, a prodigal, and soft as butter.<sup>3</sup> The hurling of such epithets soon led to blows. Even the religious orders became tainted with the race-spirit. We read that the superior of the Dominicans in Oxford objected to the receiving of subjects from other nations in the convent of that place, for which he was deposed in general chapter and subjected to a severe penance for several years.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vallet de Viriville: *Histoire de l'Instruction Publique en Europe*, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> *Munimenta Academica*, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Jacques de Vitry: *Historia Occidentalis*, cap. vii., p. 278. Archbishop Vaughan erroneously mentions the Picards in this quotation. Jacques de Vitry does not use the word.

<sup>4</sup> Martene and Durand: *Thesaurus Anecd.*, t. iv., 1730, 1731.

There was one common enemy in relation to whom all the nations in all the universities were united as one man. That enemy was the town. The students were so protected by papal and royal decrees that they could behave most outrageously with the greatest impunity and escape chastisement. The university became the spoiled child of kings and popes. The young men had no respect for person or property. They compelled the passers-by to give up their purses and spent the booty so acquired in the taverns with the vilest company of men and women. No townsman or townswoman was safe in their hands. No matter how great their crime, if taken into custody by the civil authorities the whole university was up in arms and suspended all lessons till the culprits were released.<sup>1</sup> There was never a peace between town and gown; there was merely an armistice; the feud was only smouldering when it was not open. Affrays not infrequently ended in the plundering of houses and even in murder. A characteristic incident that occurred in 1381 in Cambridge when the country was in a state of intense excitement, is told by Mr. J. Bass Mullinger: "At Corpus Christi all the books, charters and writings belonging to the society were destroyed. At St. Mary's the university chest was broken open, and the documents which it contained met with a similar fate. The masters and scholars, under intimidation, surrendered all their charters, muniments and ordinances, and a grand conflagration ensued in the market-place, where an ancient beldame was to be seen scattering the ashes in the air, as she exclaimed, 'Thus perish the skill of the clerks!'"<sup>2</sup> These instances might be multiplied at will.

The nations soon grew beyond the mere purposes of discipline that seemed to have been the primary object of their formation. The prominence that they acquired in avenging injuries done any member of their guild, whether by legal process or otherwise, gave them a voice in the administration of the university. Their proctors were received with the dignity and honor becoming representatives of bodies so powerful. They elected officers; they prescribed studies; they were foremost in repelling every attack made upon the rights and privileges of the university by chancellor or bishop. They elected a common head who became known as the rector. In 1249 they agreed that this election shall be by means of the four proctors.<sup>3</sup> The rector was taken exclusively from the faculty of arts. At first elected for a month, afterwards for six weeks, he was by statute of 1278 elected for three months.

<sup>1</sup> For instances see Du Boulay, *Hist. Univ. Paris*, t. v., pp. 97, 145, 830; t. vi., p. 490.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the University of Cambridge*, "Epochs of Church History," p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Bulæus, *Hist. Univ. Paris*, vol. iii., p. 222.



In the beginning he was only the common head of the nations. Denifle says: "If the rector was only head of the nations, and these were not identical with the university, it is self-evident that the rector was not head of the university."<sup>1</sup> As we have seen, the nations soon became the most formidable, the most active and the most aggressive elements in the university. Towards 1300 the faculties of law and medicine were subject to the rector of the four nations; towards 1350 the faculty of theology fell under his jurisdiction, and he then became head of the whole university.<sup>2</sup> Father Denifle considers the office to have been a superfluous one throughout the whole career of the university.<sup>3</sup> Be this as it may, the day of his installation was one of great rejoicing. It was celebrated by a solemn procession in which the religious orders residing in the Latin quarter joined the members of the university. His jurisdiction was supreme, extending to all schools, officers and trades under the university. He was held in great honor and esteem; was frequently called into the councils of the king, and in procession walked side by side with the bishop of Paris as his peer. He was custodian of the treasury and the archives, and controlled the *Près-aux-clercs*. He gave letters of scholarship to masters and students, conferred on them the privileges of the gown, and received from them in return the oath of perpetual obedience, no matter the dignity to which they might afterwards arrive.<sup>4</sup> He was addressed in French as *Messire*, or *l'Amplissime*; in Latin as *Amplissime Rector*, or *Vestra Amplitudo*.<sup>5</sup>

The revenue of the rector came out of the sale of parchment, which was controlled by the university. The market was permitted only in three places; namely, in a hall of the convent of the Mathurins, at the fair of St. Laurent and at that of St. Denis. The rector sent out his four sworn dealers in parchment to count and tax the bundles brought in for sale by the outside merchants. The tax being levied and gathered, after the tradesmen by appointment of the king, those of the bishops and the masters and scholars had made their purchases, the merchants were free to sell to whom they would.<sup>6</sup> In 1292 there were nineteen dealers in parchment in Paris, twelve of whom lived on the street then known as *des Écrivains*, now called *de la Parchemnerie*.<sup>7</sup>

The great event in this connection was the fair held at St. Denis. From 1109 it was customary for the people headed by the bishop and many of the clergy of Paris, to go in procession to the open plain of St. Denis in order to venerate a portion of the true Cross.

<sup>1</sup> *Entstehung*, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> Denifle, *ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 693.

<sup>4</sup> Vallet de Viriville, *Histoire de l'Instruction publique en Europe*, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>6</sup> Crevier, *Histoire de l'Université*, t. ii, p. 130.

<sup>7</sup> A. Franklin, *La Vie privée d'Autrefois, Ecoles et Colleges*, p. 94.

The relic was exposed, prayers were said, sermons were preached and solemn benediction was given. The exposition of the Holy Cross lasted nine days during which these devotions were repeated. Merchants took occasion of the throngs to expose their wares, and the plain of St. Denis during this season became also a place of chaffer—a fair—*indictum*.<sup>1</sup> As late as 1429 the religious character was still kept up, for we find that June 8th of that year the bishop and clergy went to St. Denis in order to preach a sermon and give benediction of the Holy Cross.<sup>2</sup> Early in the thirteenth century St. Denis became the chief market for parchments. The rector of the university recognized it as such, and rode in state to the fair, and had his seal impressed upon all the parchments required during the year.<sup>3</sup> It was the occasion of a general holiday for the university. The students started from St. Genevieve's, and rode in procession to the grounds amid the astonishment of the townfolk. No sooner had they set foot on the ground than they abandoned themselves to all kinds of disorder. It was a pilgrimage of voluptuousness in which innumerable excesses were committed.<sup>4</sup> In following the doings of the rector we are getting a further glimpse of mediæval university life. His was a unique position in that life. To attain the goal of his ambition, his nation—and every nation had its own candidate—set on foot intrigues in which they exhausted their ingenuity; there was rivalry open and secret; there were bribings and threatenings; masters and scholars became excited; violence and quarrelling were frequent, ending sometimes in murder.<sup>5</sup> Disorder and turmoil preceded the attaining of the office; Disorder and turmoil accompanied the celebrations connected with the holding of the office; disorder and turmoil succeeded to the going out of office. This excitement—this constant seething of brain and vibration of nerve—enters into the very life of the university.

It was out of all this turmoil that the university grew into life and being under the fostering care of Church and State. The privileges that both Church and State conceded were the vital principle of her existence. "A university without privileges," says Du Boulay, "is a body without a soul."<sup>6</sup> Looking back upon her growth, we find her cradled in the sanctuary of Notre Dame, then nourished into full development as an organism, independent of the state, with her own autonomy and with power to make her own laws.

<sup>1</sup> Whence l'endit—lendit—*Landit*.

<sup>2</sup> Le Beuf, *Histoire du Diocese de Paris*, t. iii., p. 283.

<sup>3</sup> Le Beuf, *ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>4</sup> Vallet de Viriville, *loc. cit.*, p. 172. A full description—a description that we dare not reproduce—written between 1290 and 1300, has been published in the valuable work of Le Beuf, *Histoire du Diocese de Paris*, p. 259.

<sup>5</sup> Thurot, *De l'Organisation*, p. 32.

<sup>6</sup> *Hist. Univ. Paris.*, vol. i., p. 95.

She drew her vitality from the Holy See. The same is true of Oxford and Cambridge. It is amusing to note how jealously Oxford watched Paris. Whatever privilege Paris received, Oxford claimed as being on a par with her sister *Studium*. Nay, if some of the doctors in Paris were given a benefice or made bishops, forthwith Oxford sent a deputation to Rome asking for an equal share in the bounty of the Holy See. As science is free as truth, even so were these mediæval universities secure from all control. This complete liberty was the secret of their success. Scholars and masters enjoyed immunity from civil jurisdiction, and were answerable for their behavior only to fellow-members. In this respect, the University of Paris stood alone, a power great and unique in the world, ranking in prestige and influence with the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire. Doctrinal heresies lurked and grew within the precincts of this and other universities; immorality was at times rampant among students and professors, but withal, as children of the Church, encouraged and protected by the popes, they were Catholic in their spirit and in the general tone of their teachings. "Privileged and well-beloved daughters of the Church," says Wimpfeling, "they endeavored by their fidelity and attachment to render to their mother all that they owed her."<sup>1</sup> So long as they remained docile to the Church they flourished; the moment they were secularized and became mere tools in the hands of unscrupulous governments, they fell from their high and exceptional standing. This is their history in a nutshell.

## II.

Such was the outward showing of a mediæval university as witnessed in its highest type. Its inner life was more varied and interesting. Let us again confine ourselves to Paris or to its models. The University of Paris was an intellectual centre through which passed numerous currents of humanity from every part of Christendom,—all devoured by a thirst for knowledge that could scarcely be satisfied. There was scarcely a class or condition of men that was not to be found in a mediæval university. The rich were there, and in their eagerness to acquire knowledge forgot that they were rich, and neglected to surround themselves with the luxuries and comforts that wealth might have purchased. The poor were there, and were not ashamed of their poverty. Prince and peasant, lordly cardinal and struggling clerk, sat on the same floor listening to the same lecture. Boys of twelve were there; a statute had to be passed excluding those under that age. Men of thirty were there; "at the age of thirty or forty," says Le Clerc, "the student

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<sup>1</sup> *De Arte Impressorio*, p. 19.

at the university was still a scholar."<sup>1</sup> Professors in one department of letters were to be seen, after delivering their own lectures, seated in the same hall with their pupils studying the same matter. "This gave to the professorship," says Janssen, "a lively, animated and youthful emulation; to the student a dignity and an influence, traces of which we meet with everywhere in the constitutions of the universities."<sup>2</sup>

Before assisting at a lesson, let us acquire some idea of the attainments of scholars and masters. Students began the university course at an early age. Having learned reading, writing and the elements of Latin grammar, they started to study logic at the age of twelve, and from fourteen upward they were in position to submit to the examinations and carry on the disputations that were requisite before receiving any academic distinction. The first was that of determinant. In order to receive the distinction of determinant, the student, after his second year's course, applied for examination. This examination was severe. Immediately before Christmas, the candidate sustained, in presence of the school, an argument or dispute on some question of morals against a regent. Finally, there was the crowning test, in which he disputed daily, till the end of Lent, in the school of his nation, rue de Fouarre. Remember that these disputes were carried on by boys not older than fifteen or sixteen years. In 1472 the Lenten disputes were suppressed, and the degree of bachelor was substituted for that of determinant. If successful, the candidate received a certificate showing that he had read the following works:

1. *The Introduction* of Porphyry in the translation of Boëthius. Porphyry wrote the book as an introduction to the *Categories* of Aristotle, a work also translated by Boëthius. It was through this book that the question of Nominalism and Realism assumed such vast proportions during the Middle Ages.

2. *The Categories* of Aristotle.

3. The book on *Interpretation*, which was the only part of Aristotle's writings taught before the ninth century in the translation of Boëthius. It is generally known under its Greek title *Perihermenias*.

4. *The Syntax* of Priscian. This contained books xvii. and xviii. of Priscian's Grammar, and was known as the *Priscianus Minor*. Priscian (flor. 500) was the standard grammarian of the Middle Ages.

5. An ordinary or an extraordinary course in the *Topics* and *Elenchi* of Aristotle. These books had been translated by James of Venice before 1128.<sup>3</sup>

6. The determinant should, in addition, have followed during two years the course in dogmatics, and should have assisted at, and taken part in, the disputations.

The course here given is of the thirteenth century. In the fifteenth century there was a general revolt against the scholastic system, and morals and rhetoric received a more prominent place.

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Litt. de la France au XIVème Siècle*, i., p. 269.      <sup>2</sup> *Geschichte*, i., p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> An. Jourdain, *Recherches Critiques sur les Traductions d'Aristote*, p. 58.

In 1452 the rules of versification were made a recognized part of the course, and in 1457 the study of Greek was added. But, looking at the programme of studies here laid down, it must be said that it was heavy work for youths not older than fifteen or sixteen. It may seem strange to us that boys of that age could carry on such disputes. The precociousness of the youth of those days is a fact that has been frequently commented upon. Tiraboschi called attention to it, and Janssen gives several instances in the fifteenth century, in which extraordinary things are told of studious youths. Adam Potken (1490) read the "Euclid of Virgil and the Orations of Cicero" to pupils ranging from eleven to twelve years of age. John Eck (b. 1486) completed all the Latin classics from his ninth to his twelfth year. At the age of thirteen he entered Heidelberg, and at fifteen received from Tübingen the degree of Master of Arts. John Muller, the celebrated mathematician, matriculated in the university of Leipzig at the age of twelve, and in his sixteenth year, received his Master's degree from the university of Vienna.<sup>1</sup> Multiplicity of subjects and multiplicity of textbooks tend to weaken the intellectual grasp of the modern student. In those mediæval days, when the student had few notes and less books to fall back upon, having listened to his lessons attentively and retained them carefully in memory, he became more self-reliant and if possessed of a fair share of talent, could hold his own in disputation.

The determinant had certain privileges and certain duties. He was entitled to wear a cape and to assist at the masses of the nations. Every Friday he was obliged to discuss grammar with the backward boys. He was liable to be called upon as assistant teacher and give special or cursory lessons. This led to abuse; for we find from the statutes of Oxford that determinants, upon receipt of a bribe, were given to neglect the ordinary lessons and devote themselves exclusively to the cursory lessons. He furthermore presided over the disputations of the younger students, reviewed the whole question under discussion, noticed the imperfections or fallacies in the arguments advanced, and then pronounced his decisions or determinations in the scholastic forms.<sup>2</sup> His duty at other times was to dispute logic daily, except Friday, when he disputed grammar, and the first and last day of his determination when he disputed questions in morals and dogma. The hours for determining were from 9 to 12 and from 1 to 5.<sup>3</sup> In the meantime, after the first principal test, the determinant continued his studies till he had completed his twenty-first year, when he was

<sup>1</sup> Janssen, *Geschichte*, pp. 59, 60.

<sup>2</sup> Anstey, *Munimenta Academica*, i. p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

of age to become a licentiate, or one having the inherent right to teach. He should also have made public reading in some school, of a book of Aristotle during a whole year.

For the grand act of inception there was long and severe preparation on the part of the intellectual athlete, and when the event arrived it was accompanied by great excitement and turbulence. The ceremony was held in the hall of the nation under which the aspirant was ranked. The aspirant went from school to school inviting each master in person.<sup>1</sup> Invitations of most elaborate designs were sent out to distinguished persons, and were frequently accepted. Charles VIII. of France was present in 1485 at the sustaining of a thesis. It was the ambition of every bachelor and his friends to have a brilliant gathering, and they resorted to every means to attain their object. This ambition went to the extent of making it customary to drag in every passer-by, will-he, nill-he, in order to have a large audience. Statutes were enacted forbidding the practice under pain of excommunication and imprisonment.<sup>2</sup> The mode of disputation did not vary. The theses had been announced some time before. The conclusions were beautifully inscribed on the invitations that had been sent out. The hour having arrived, let us enter the hall. The master is seated upon a platform in a large arm-chair. The candidate for inception stands before him. The first thesis is announced, the young bachelor repeats the proposition, divides it up into its various headings and explains each as best he can. It is not permitted to interrupt him according to the statutes; but on this point the statutes are frequently broken. He is not long speaking when an opponent undertakes to pick flaws in his arguments, formulating all his objections in the mould of the syllogism. The defendant takes up the objections, resolves them into their component parts, discusses separately their affirmative and their negative sense, throws his arguments into the syllogistic form, now distinguishing in regard to the use of terms, now denying the major or minor premiss, now calling attention to the employment of an undistributed middle term. As the debate grows warm the dialectic skill and acumen of each shine forth. The opponent takes hold of the last distinction made by the defensor, and actually places him upon the horns of a dilemma. The audience cheers. The defensor is staggered; only for a moment, however. He retorts the dilemma upon his wily objector and routs him amid the clamor of the students. Another takes up the cudgels and attacks the thesis from his point of view. Again, there are distinctions and syllogisms and dilemmas as before. And so, "amid loud clamor on the part of the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 433.

<sup>2</sup> Vallet de Viriville, *Hist. de l'Education Publique*, p. 137.

audience, and on the part of the combatants great shaking of the head and stamping of the feet, and extending of the fingers, and waving of the hands, and contortions of the body as though they were crazed,"<sup>1</sup> the work goes on for hours, during whole days and even weeks. Be it remembered that a written essay or thesis was in those days something unknown among students. Everything was carried on orally.<sup>2</sup> At last, after a severe struggle, the successful bachelor becomes an inceptor. Here, by the way, is the origin of our word "commencement" as applied to the closing exercises of a college.

The disputation concluded, the newly-made inceptor takes oath to observe the statutes and also that he is provided with a school in which to read.<sup>3</sup> Forthwith the biretta is placed on his head and he gives his inaugural lecture. If it is a candidate who incepts as a master in grammar, the beadle presents him with a birch and a ferule, with which he publicly flogs a boy within the precinct of the school. He pays the beadle for providing the birch and the boy for submitting to the flogging.<sup>4</sup> Then comes the feasting incident to inception, from which none are exempt. Even members of religious orders are obliged to give in money the average cost of a banquet. The officers and the invited guests are arranged in order of precedence by the chancellor, or rector, or proctor of the nation. Presents consisting usually of silk or kid gloves, or of a scarlet hood were made to the officers and the distinguished guests. The statutes of Oxford decreed that on account of the violence and disorderly scenes that accompanied this banquet, no one should stop the free ingress and egress of any master or his servants to or from the hall or tent or other place in which the graduating feast is held, and that no one except the servants of the university, or the host, shall enter the said hall or tent until the masters who have been invited shall enter with their servants, and after they shall have sat down, no one else shall sit down except by the appointment of the chancellor, and each in proper order according to his rank; and furthermore it is decreed that no one shall beat the doors, tables, or roof, or throw stones or other missiles so as to disturb the guests, under penalty of imprisonment, excommunication and a fine of twelve pence.<sup>5</sup> So great became the abuse, that ultimately all these costly rejoicings were abolished.

The inceptor's next step was to apply for the master's degree. This was done as follows: Upon application the inceptor received

<sup>1</sup> Peter Cantor, *Verbum Abbreviatum*, cap. v. p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Thurot, *De l'Organ, de l'Université*, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> *Mun. Acad.*, p. 414.

<sup>4</sup> See Mullinger: *History of the University of Cambridge*, i., p. 344

<sup>5</sup> *Munimenta Académica*, i., pp. 308, 309.

from the chancellor a book on which he was to be interrogated. After mastering the volume he returned to obtain a day in which he might present himself for examination. Upon the day named he appeared before a jury of several masters presided over by the chancellor, and after a searching examination he was declared admitted to the honor sought, or was postponed for another year. Furnished with ecclesiastical approbation, he came before the members of his faculty and received at their hands the master's cap. Once made master, the inceptor was required to teach while pursuing his own studies in theology, in medicine, or in civil or canon law. "The fact," says Mr. J. Bass Mullinger, "that each master of arts, in turn was called upon to take part in the work of instruction is one of the most notable features in the mediæval universities. His remuneration was limited to the fees paid by the scholars who formed his auditory to the bedells, and was often consequently extremely small. When once, however, he had discharged this function, he became competent to lecture in any faculty to which he might turn his attention, and . . . when studying either the civil or canon law, theology or medicine, might be a lecturer on subjects included in his own course."<sup>1</sup> Here we leave the master teaching philosophy and pursuing his studies in the professional courses, in order to consider another element that enters into the formation of the university, and though the cooperation of that element was never cordially welcomed, it none the less contributed largely to the university's development and prestige.

### III.

Two religious orders that had sprung into existence about the same time with the universities, soon became identified with them and exercised over them a deep and an abiding influence. These were the Franciscans and the Dominicans. Erase from the records of both Paris and Oxford the names of the learned men furnished by these orders, and you extinguish the greatest lights, the most dazzling glories, of mediæval thought. There is a void that nothing can supply. Had these men not lived and labored as they did, the whole trend of modern thought would run differently. The Dominicans were the first religious order admitted to membership in the university of Paris, and with time became the leaders of thought. The Franciscans guided the destinies of Oxford. Oxford was the nursery of the order, from the time when Richard Muliner gave the corporation a house and piece of ground for their use, and Brother Agnello, coming up from London, caused to be built a decent school in which he in-

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<sup>1</sup> *A History of the University of Cambridge*, p. 28.



duced Robert Grosseteste to deliver lectures, and the future eminent bishop of Lincoln brought that school into high repute—from that time the Gray friars became a power in the university.<sup>1</sup> They made rapid strides in study, in disputation and in teaching. The most eminent men in England considered it an honor to lecture under their auspices. Under the able administration of Adam Marsh, the Gray friars achieved a world-wide reputation for learning. Let one who has made a thorough and a loving study of them speak, though he was not of their visible communion, and to all appearances died not a member of their household. Professor Brewer says: “Lyons, Paris, and Cologne were indebted for their first professors to the English Franciscans in Oxford. Repeated applications were made from Ireland, Denmark, France and Germany for English friars; foreigners were sent to the English school as superior to all others. It enjoyed a reputation throughout the world for adhering the most conscientiously and strictly to the poverty and severity of the order; and for the first time since its existence as a university, Oxford rose to a position not even second to Paris itself. The three schoolmen of the most profound and original genius, Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus and Occham, were trained within its walls. No other nation of Christendom can show a succession of names at all comparable to the English schoolmen in originality and subtlety, in the breadth and variety of their attainments.”<sup>2</sup> This unstinted tribute is not exaggerated.

That the Franciscans should achieve such greatness as a learned body is all the more remarkable, when it is remembered that Francis of Assisi, in making poverty his bride and the chief glory of his Order, had intended that poverty of spirit should extend to deprivation of intellectual food. He dreaded the influence of learned doctors upon his friars. He did not intend to create an order of students; his sole object was to form simple men in the mould of nature's own simplicity, detached from anything in life, and, most of all, from self, burning with love of God and zeal for their neighbor; men of the people, in touch and sympathy with the people, living amongst the poorest upon the fare of the poorest, going into pest-houses and nursing the sick, waiting upon lepers, loving whatever was loathsome in humanity, seeking and cherishing whatever was abandoned or whatever others shrank from; men free as truth. In moulding such men, he was laying the deepest and most solid foundation on which to build up the noblest intellectual superstructure. The spirit for study, the craving for knowledge, a spirit and a craving that have never been surpassed, filled the

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<sup>1</sup> *Monumenta Franciscana*, vol. i., p. 17 and p. 549.

<sup>2</sup> *Monumenta Franciscana*, i., preface, lxxxi.

very atmosphere of the thirteenth century. No body of men, with such noble aspirations as those possessed by the disciples of Assisi,<sup>1</sup> could resist the inspiration of the hour, or keep pace with the progress of humanity, without utilizing one of the most God-like gifts bestowed upon man—his intellectual endowments. As early as 1217, the Franciscans were installed in Paris, and it is not many years before we find them thoroughly equipped for educational purposes. In a short period they grew to be thousands. They provided for their own subjects a school of grammar, a school of rhetoric, a school of logic, and a fourth school for the study of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard and the *Physics* of Aristotle. The hall for their advanced students was not excelled by any in the university. Their method was that of the university. They held two lectures in the morning—one on dogmatic theology, the other on particular issues requiring explanation. In the afternoon, there was a lecture on Holy Scripture, and from four to five the friars held open disputation, in which any comer was free to join.<sup>2</sup> In their rules of prayer, and missionary labor, and in devoting themselves to healing the ailments of body and soul, they acquired a training and received a special formation that the university could not give.

Their educational influence was many-sided. Mingling with the people, they cultivated the language of the people, and helped to fix the forms of our modern tongues; as nurses of the sick, they compounded medicines and learned the healing properties of plants; as missionaries, they travelled among many peoples, shrewd observers of men and manners and customs;<sup>3</sup> as instructors of the people in the truths of their religion, they organized companies to enact, and enacted themselves, at times, in the ancient miracle-plays, the great truths of our holy religion; as disciples of their saintly founder who loved all things in nature, who called the sun his brother and welcomed death as his sister, they also looked upon bird and beast, flower and tree, with kindly and observant eye, and learned to respect and reverently investigate the phenomena of nature; and so it happens that a Vincent of Beauvais gives us the Cyclopædia of the thirteenth century, and that Roger Bacon makes his "Opus Majus" the forerunner of the "Novum Organum" of his namesake of four hundred years later; in the domain of art, the tender devotion that they inculcated for Mary

<sup>1</sup> See Luke Wadding: *Annales Minorum*, t. i., p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> Vaughan: *St. Thomas of Aquina*, pp. 228, 229.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Itinerary* of Blessed Odoric of Pordenone, in the *Acta Sanctorum*, under January 14th. From this book, and from the account of the Franciscan friar, Carpini, concerning the Tartars, Sir John Maundeville filched all that is truthful in his so-called *Travels*. See *Encyclopædia Britannica*, new edition.

Immaculate inspired the school of art which flowered into the Madonnas of Raphael.

The Dominicans were established with the formal purpose of occupying themselves with books and studies rather than with the singing of antiphons and responsories,<sup>1</sup> for their sole mission was to preach the doctrines of Christianity and to refute heresy. Their courses of instruction were accordingly thoroughly organized from the beginning. In each convent, four officers were charged with the studies: The prior, who looked after the general conduct and the spiritual and physical wants of the young brothers; the lector and sub-lector, who taught in the schools; and the master of studies, who was always with the brothers, taking part in their exercises, presiding over their repetitions, assisting at their examinations, and even, at times, explaining the lesson. In the fourteenth century, to these were added a cursory reader and a chief lector. The youthful aspirant to the order was admitted at the age of fifteen, and was supposed to be instructed in all the preliminary branches of education. His novitiate, which lasted three years, was divided between study, spiritual exercises, and manual labor. The novitiate passed, the novice went through a three years' course of logic and rhetoric; his whole course in logic should extend to five years. This was known as the *Studium artium*. It corresponded to the course pursued in the university for a bachelor's degree. Its method was comprised in the three traditional words: Lectures, study, disputation—*legendendo, studendo, ac disputando*. The lector explained the text of the grammar, rhetoric, or logic, which the student had in hand; the student immediately withdrew to learn the lesson. Later, all assembled, and there were repetitions and colloquies or discussions in circles of students of the same capacity. There were semi-annual examinations, and formal disputations were carried on from time to time. By these means the student was prepared for the grand act of disputation.

The young Dominican then passed to the course of ethics and physics, provided he was adjudged "tried, instructed and of good health,"<sup>2</sup> for to none other was the course given. The course was known as the *Studium naturalium*. It extended over two years till 1372 when it was made thereafter a three years' course. It comprised natural philosophy, ethics, mathematics and all the sciences of that day. The treatises of Aristotle were pressed into service as rapidly as they were translated. It was the course in which the genius of Albertus Magnus was watered and bloomed into flower and leaf and ripened into fruitful and suggestive thought

<sup>1</sup> Theodosia Drane; *Christian Schools and Scholars*, vol. ii., p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Provincial chapter of Montpellier, held in 1271. (See G. Douais; *Organisation des Etudes chez les Frères Prêcheurs*, p. 69.)

in scientific matters; and how great Albertus Magnus was in the domain of natural science only a Poucher and a Humboldt can adequately tell. Even in that age Albert made permanent contributions to physical science.<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas availed himself of this course so well that he was afterwards able to speak to the students of the University of Paris, upon the construction of aqueducts and machinery for raising and conducting water—*de aquarum conductibus et ingeniis erigendis*—as well as expound the *Timæus* of Plato.<sup>2</sup>

From this course the student passed to theology. The *Studium Theologiæ* lasted three years. It differed from the previous course in that there was no exemption from its curriculum. The subject was so vast and so profoundly was it studied, it was never completely mastered. No member was too old or too learned to say that there was nothing more for him to acquire. Hence, all were required to follow the course. "The Friar Preacher," says Douais, "whether student or professor, assisted at the lessons in theology with the two-fold intent of not forgetting what he had already learned and of adding to his stock of knowledge."<sup>3</sup> Here also, the method of teaching was in many respects similar to that pursued in the university. A text-book was read and commented upon by the lector. For a long time the "Sentences" of Peter Lombard was the text. Later, the commentaries were carefully written before being delivered to the students. Lessons were given every day except feast-days. The customs of the order recognized three kinds of lessons; the public or ordinary lesson at which all assisted; the private lesson given to backward students, and the extraordinary or cursory lessons similar to those of the university, generally imparted by bachelors without being seated in the master's chair. There were repetitions, colloquies and disputations as in the philosophy classes. Only a doctor in theology was permitted to preside over the disputations. The times for disputation were Advent and Lent. The rule rigidly insisted that all the brethren be present at these exercises, and it was only after the disputation that they were permitted to go out to preach. Humbert Romanus, one of the generals of the Order, in calling attention to the defects against which the students should guard, throws further light upon the mode of conducting the exercise. He is unsparing in his censure of those friars, even though they be doctors, who presume to speak at all times in a light, flippant vein, without proper preparation, or without sufficient ability to discuss their themes. He is no less severe upon those who preserve an obstinate silence during the whole time of the exercise, whether through laziness, or tim-

<sup>1</sup> See Echard: *Scriptores Ordinis Prædicatorum*, t. i., pp. 162-183.

<sup>2</sup> Bulaeus, *Hist. Univ. Par.*, t. iii., p. 408.

<sup>3</sup> *Organisation des Etudes chez les Frères Prêcheurs*, p. 75.

idity, or dread of defeat. Some debated well, but their vanity was continually cropping out; in season and out of season they aired their knowledge when holy and learned men would have blushed to name the authors that they had read. Some there were who simply sought to get the better of the argument, regardless of truth; others lacked precision and clearness, while not a few were obscure and diffuse. Even the most penetrating minds, at times, became lost in minute distinctions that were vain and useless.<sup>1</sup> These disputations among the doctors in theology were not carried on merely with a view of sharpening the wits, or carrying on an intellectual joust, or as a display of talent. Their aim was higher. It was for the search after truth, the probing of truth, the more complete expression of truth.

We have not yet exhausted the educational resources of the Dominicans. The Order had in reserve other courses of discipline. Each province was obliged to have two special schools for the more gifted of its subjects.<sup>2</sup> These schools were intended solely for those young friars whose aptitude gave promise of their becoming lecturers one day. The friars were sent thither after pursuing the ordinary three years' course in theology. A doctor in theology, having under him a sub-lector, was placed in charge of each school. In 1290, a lecturer was appointed to teach special courses in exegesis and other biblical studies. These schools were known as the *Studia solemnia*. The method of instruction pursued in them was the same as that pursued in the lower course. The studies were simply broadened and deepened. Those pursuing them were not permitted to remain longer than three years.

Nor was this all. In certain centres, schools of higher study were established. They were called *Studia generalia*. They were no mere novices in learning who were sent up to these schools. They were men who had been teaching for years, and who now resumed their studies with the intention of winning the doctor's cap and of perfecting themselves in special branches. These schools were established in Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Naples, Montpellier and other university centres. Those who assisted at the course instituted in Paris did so with the view of becoming profound theologians; those who attended the course in Bologna had in view chiefly the study of civil and canon law; those who went to Barcelona intended to become skilled in the sciences of the Moors and versed in the Arabic and Hebrew languages. The discipline of these houses was severe. There was no vacation as in other schools; the courses were profound, and were carried on without

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<sup>1</sup> *Expositio regule B. Augustini*, Biblioth. municip. de Toulouse, MS., 417 (I. 402, fo. 147 b.), quoted by Douais, *loc. cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Douais, *loc. cit.*, p. 127.

intermission during the whole three years that they lasted. None but brothers of approved health and tried powers of endurance, with a constitution equal to the great strain, were admitted to take up these courses. They were men who had already given evidence of their intellectual prowess as professors of philosophy, theology, Sacred Scriptures, or even as priors. Peter Lombard's book of "Sentences" was read through each year; there was also a complete course of biblical studies, besides the special branches that predominated in each school. Here the friars made a more profound study of the philosophical and theological errors of the day—and the very air was reeking with such errors—as well as of the Sacred Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church. The professors of the school were picked men. The superior called them together from all parts of Christendom. Once a week they held a solemn dispute. Such a dispute—deep, thoughtful, searching—must have been quite a contrast with the wranglings daily going on in School street at Oxford or the rue de Fouarre at Paris. After fifteen years of study—not counting the years spent besides in teaching or preaching on the mission—these men must indeed have become well-equipped to proclaim truth and meet error, no matter the guise under which it should appear. In connection with this solemn and learned body of men discussing the great issues of their day one image fills the mind. It is that of the magnificent tribute which Raphael paid to the Real Presence in his sublime picture, *La Disputa*. There has the artist painted the very men who took part in such solemn discussions. And though Duns Scotus and Dante were more at home in the halls of a Franciscan convent, still we meet there the familiar faces of Albert and Aquinas. We should never grow weary of repeating the fact that the greatest glory of the Dominican *Studium*; indeed, of the mediæval university, is Thomas Aquinas. There was no principle of human reason that he did not lay bare; there was no problem in physical or metaphysical science that he did not grapple with and find a solution for; there was no prevailing error that he did not attack and pursue to its last lurking-place. The very construction of the propositions in his most scientific work, the *Summa Theologiæ*, the very words in which he formulates objections, are understood only in the light of the history of contemporaneous error. He fought no windmills; he set up no men of straw in order to knock them down. He dealt with living issues. He was in touch with his age upon all its intellectual wants and aspirations. When pondering over his marvellous pages, let us not forget that while much is due to the transcendent genius of their writer, much also is due to the admirable conservative method and rigid intellectual discipline of the Order in which that genius was moulded.

A student once asked Thomas the best method of becoming proficient in science. The rules laid down by the Angelical Doctor are few and simple and to the point, and reflect the serenity of his own life. They bespeak a rare habit of mental cautiousness. They may be summarized as follows: "Pass from the easy to the difficult; be slow to speak and equally slow to give assent to the speaker; keep your conscience clear; do not neglect prayer; be amiable towards everybody, but keep your own mind; above all things avoid running about from one school to another; let it be your delight to sit at the professor's feet;<sup>1</sup> be more concerned to hoard in memory the good things said than to regard the person speaking; strive to understand what you read, clearing your mind of all doubts as you go along; eagerly seek to place whatever knowledge you can get hold of in the depository of your mind; find out what you can do, study your limitations, and do not aim higher than your capacity permits."<sup>2</sup> These are golden words to be cherished by every student.

Such suggestions were especially valuable in those days. The spirit of university life was catching, and that spirit was a wild and lawless one. "The professors in great part," says Archbishop Vaughan, "were reckless adventurers, a sort of wild knight-errants who scoured the country in search of excitement for the mind and money for the pocket. The students were, in the main, disorderly youths, living in the very centre of corruption, without control, loving a noisy, dissipated life in town. . . . They would rollick and row, and stream in and out of the schools, like swarms of hornets, buzzing and litigating and quarrelling with one another, upsetting every semblance of discipline and order."<sup>3</sup> The picture is not overdrawn. It is merely a garbled transcript from the accounts left us by John of Salisbury, and Cardinal Vitry. "The distinguished traits," says Leclerc, "of this student life, the memories of which have survived with singular tenacity, were poverty, ardent application, and turbulence."<sup>4</sup> The students were as riotous in intellectual matters as many of them were licentious in morals. No subject was too sacred for their curiosity; there was no truth that they were not prepared to challenge. The masters were bold and unscrupulous in their treatment of the holiest doctrines. Nay, so fond of novelties were they, that they were known to pay scholars to receive their strange teachings. The Franciscans and Dominicans, in the first fervor of their formation, every member

<sup>1</sup> There is here a play upon words that cannot be reproduced: *Sellam frequentare diligas, si vis in cellam vinariam introduci.*

<sup>2</sup> *Opusculum*, lxi. Opp. t., xvii., p. 338.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of St. Thomas of Aquin*, p. 206.

<sup>4</sup> *Etat des Lettres au XIV. Siecle* (see the whole passage), i. 269-271.

filled with the spirit of charity and zeal, conservative and orthodox in their teachings—more especially the Dominicans—were a standing rebuke to the masters and scholars who were given to novelties and unwilling to mend their ways. Even the better class of university men looked askance at the coming among them of these religious. They were regarded as intruders. The prejudice extended from the university to the court. The laureate of St. Louis attacked the Dominicans. "They preach to us," he says, "that it is sinful to be angry and sinful to be envious, whilst they themselves carry on war for a chair in the university. They must, they will, obtain it. . . . The Jacobins are persons of such weight that they can do everything in Paris and in Rome.<sup>1</sup> But the members of the university were not content with words. They attempted to boycott the religious. "The masters and scholars of the rival schools would not permit young men to attend the lectures of the Dominicans, nor allow the young Dominicans to be present at secular disputations and defensions." The spites and jealousies that were arrayed against them, found voice in the pamphlet—"Latter Day Perils"—of William of Saint Amour. It was a trumpet blast calling forth all the pent-up feelings that men had been nursing against the friars. We shall not enter into the details of this controversy. Suffice it to say that Thomas Aquinas was deputed to reply to the scurrilous tract, and he did so with all the calmness, scientific precision, and delicate sense of justice that characterize his works above those of his contemporaries. He met the issue in his own direct and simple manner. He asks: "Can regulars be members of a college of secular masters?" and replies that they most undoubtedly can, since the function that seculars and regulars exercise as teachers is based upon that which is common to both, namely, to study and teach. "The function of teaching and learning," to use his own words, "is common to seculars and to religious men; whence there is nothing to forbid religious men from being associated with seculars in the same function of study and teaching,<sup>2</sup> even as men in diverse conditions compose the same body of the Church, inasmuch as they all agree in unity of faith." More regularly organized than the university itself, these religious schools had a staying influence upon her students, her professors, and her courses of study.

<sup>1</sup> *Oeuvres Complètes de Rutebeuf*, t. ii., p. 251. The Dominicans were called Jacobins because their convent was on the St. Jacques.

<sup>2</sup> Vaughan: *Life of St. Thomas of Aquin*, p. 250.

<sup>3</sup> *Opusculum*, i., cap. iii. *Op.* xvii., p. 11, ed. Parma. The same subject is discussed in the *Summa Theologiae*, 2a, 2æ. Quaest. 187, 188. For a detailed account of the controversy see Vaughan, *Life of St. Thomas of Aquin*, pp. 208-367.



## IV.

We shall now descend to the university schools and from the various side-lights that have been thrown upon them, endeavor to catch a glimpse of the manner in which masters and scholars live and act therein. Throughout this intellectual seething mass, there are schools giving instruction in the whole gamut of learning contained in the Trivium and the Quadrivium. Here is a class of youths studying grammar. In the Middle Ages, grammar included literature and composition as well as the technical rules of construction. It covered the whole of the humanities. Hraban Maur defines grammar to be "the science of interpreting poets and historians, and of writing and speaking correctly."<sup>1</sup> John of Salisbury, who resided in Paris in the latter half of the twelfth century thus describes the method pursued by his teacher, one of the most competent in his day: "Bernard of Chartres, not confining himself to grammar, threw in a thousand observations during the reading of his lesson, on the choice of words and of thoughts as well as on the variety and the pleasingness of style. . . . He cultivated carefully the memory of his pupils by obliging them to recite—some more, some less—the most beautiful passages from the historians and poets commented upon in class; and he always questioned them upon the lesson of the previous day. He exhorted them to confine their readings to what was good and edifying and gave them a daily exercise to compose in prose and verse."<sup>2</sup> This is an admirable method; it cannot be improved upon even to-day after the intervening experience of seven hundred years. Bernard of Chartres was an ideal teacher. In the following century the grammarians were not so painstaking. Both masters and scholars were impatient to tread the mazes of logical disputation; in consequence, we find a falling off in the matter of style. "The youths of the universities, but ill-furnished with books, and be it said, but ill-disciplined, passed through the grammar classes rather unprofitably. They remained in them the least possible time, being attracted by the ever-increasing vogue of Aristotle."<sup>3</sup> We enter one of these grammar schools. The scholars are all in one room. Here is one coming from the master after reciting his lesson and having had his exercise corrected. He goes to his place, procures his tablets, a pen and ink and some parchment, and seating himself at a long table running through the centre of the room transcribes the corrected exercise upon a small sheet of parchment. The lettering is small and cramped; the words are abbreviated. You

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<sup>1</sup> *De Inst. Cler.*, lib. iii., cap. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Metalogicus*, lib. i., cap. xxiv. Col. 854, Migne ed.

<sup>3</sup> Ch. Daniel, S. J., *Des Études classiques*, chap. vi., p. 138.

would like to know the meaning of the line inscribed in this manner :

“Tityre t p r s t f.”

The teacher has been alluding to Virgil, and this is evidently a shorthand report of some line in that author's works. Here it is; the word *Tityre* gives the clue.

“Tityre, tu patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi.”

The youth next to him is taking notes in logic. He is evidently quoting an extract from Occham's Logic in the following condensed form: “*Sic hic e fal sm qd ad simplr.*” Here is the text: “*Sicut hic est fallacia secundum quid ad simpliciter.*”<sup>1</sup> The less the scholars placed upon parchment, the more they engraved their lessons upon the tablets of memory. Moreover, paper and parchment were expensive commodities in those days, and were therefore to be sparingly used. Even as late as 1502 the amount of paper assigned to each scholar for the purpose of note-taking was three sheets a week.<sup>2</sup>

Let us pass to another school. This is the Place Maubert—which shall long continue to embalm the name of Albert the Great. That dingy humid street in the neighborhood, is the street that Dante has made immortal in his great poem; it is the rue de Fouarre.<sup>3</sup> It is not an inviting street to enter. From early morning it is the busiest and noisiest thoroughfare in Paris. The students regulate their rising by the bells of the neighboring churches. The mass-bell of the Carmelites whose convent you may notice on Place Maubert gives the first signal at five o'clock. An hour later Notre Dame strikes Prime.<sup>4</sup> Then the student who boards out quits his den, and descending the stairs carefully, takes his shortest course through the by-ways and alleys to the rue de Fouarre. He enters one of these low, ill-ventilated halls with a damp heavy smell. The master is seated on a stool; it being a winter morning three or four candles spread a dim light through the heavily laden air, and the students, seated upon small trusses of straw, take notes of the lecture read by the master.<sup>5</sup> We already had a glimpse of a school of arts; then let us pass to a school of theology.

The room is also low and dingy; the light is inadequate. There are no benches; but here and there are some blocks, and there is an abundance of straw. The master sits in a large chair raised on

<sup>1</sup> Vaughan, *Life of S. Thomas of Aquin*, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> Pasquier, *Recherches sur la France*, t. i., p. 920.

<sup>3</sup> *Paradiso*, x., 136-138.

<sup>4</sup> Bulæus, *Hist. Univ. Paris.*, t. iv., p. 413.

<sup>5</sup> Alfred Franklin, *La Vie privée d'Autrefois; Ecoles et Colleges*, p. 168.

a platform. The chair has a high straight back and arms, and can easily seat two. He who is beside the master is an aspirant for the licentiate. But the master predominates over the aspirant and over the school.<sup>1</sup> Now, note the method pursued. It is composed of two parts: the reading and explanation, and the disputation. All teaching is done orally. "The act of instructing by the living voice," says Vincent of Beauvais, "possesses I know not what hidden energy, and sounds more forcibly in the ears of a disciple as it passes from the mouth of a master."<sup>2</sup> The master was at first accustomed to speak altogether without a manuscript; later in the history of the university, he read or dictated from his manuscript a commentary upon the text. But when, in 1354, Cardinal d'Estouteville reformed the university he reverted to the practice of commenting without manuscript. Indeed, the teacher was placed under oath not to read from a written commentary upon the text under discussion, lest he might cease to prepare his lessons properly.

The master is now prepared to give his lesson. The "Sentences" lies open on his lap; the students are seated around in groups; some are kneeling upon one knee with tablets in hand, prepared to take notes; some few have their own text-book, but the majority are content with getting a glance at the copy in the hall for their use. The master first reads a proposition from the Lombard. In a subdued voice and familiar tone, slightly ascending,<sup>3</sup> he discourses upon the proposition, the scholars in the meantime, as rapidly as possible, in that species of shorthand which we have already been inspecting, writing down the explanation. Hear how neatly he gives the reason for each division of the text, for each paragraph, for each sentence, for the terms employed, and note how clearly he makes the consequences to flow therefrom. The master having ended his explanation, the students compare notes and settle upon the sense and the very words of the discourse that they have heard. Some teachers, more careful than others, in order to avoid misunderstanding, or a garbled version of what they had said, dictate their explanations. In 1492 it was made a general rule that the shorter morning class be devoted to dictation.<sup>4</sup> However, in the thirteenth century, the master, whose lessons we are attending, was content with explaining the text by a running commentary, leaving the students to carry away from the lesson as much as they could, or as they cared to reproduce. The following was the method set down in the Oxford statutes: The masters

<sup>1</sup> D'Assailly, *Albert le Grand*, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Speculum Doctrinale*, lib. i., cap. 37.

<sup>3</sup> *De Disciplina Scholarium*, cap. v., Migne ed., vol. lxiv., col. 1234.

<sup>4</sup> Du Boulay, *Hist. Univ. Par.*, t. v., p. 808.

shall read the text in order; then they shall explain it fully and openly as the matter requires. The explanation being duly arranged, they shall afterwards choose notable passages from the text to be remembered. Lastly, they shall raise points for discussion, but only such as naturally arise from the text, so that no prohibited matter be taught.<sup>1</sup>

However, the chief element of university training was not the lecture; it was rather the disputation. Master disputed with master before the students; the master disputed with his scholars; the scholars disputed with one another under the supervision of a determinant who was present to repress quarrels, correct errors, prevent disputes from degenerating into personalities, and mark the indolent ones refusing to take part in the debate. The exercise was at times abused by teacher and pupils. Propositions were discussed apart from their connection; distinctions were made and divisions and subdivisions were entered into with a degree of ingenuity that only such practice as was then prevalent could achieve. This process of dialectic refining was carried to the farthest extremes. Thus Stephen Langton, who is known in history as the champion of English liberties, was previously known in Paris as a student whose work was no less solid than brilliant; one of the most enlightened expounders of the Scriptures, and a powerful preacher, with a strong musical voice that could reach any audience. Even Stephen Langton could not resist the prevailing practice of refining thought and seeking a new meaning for simple words. And so we find him taking a well-known love ditty of his day,—*Belle Aalis mains s'en leva*,—and with a view of turning bad into good, writing a commentary upon it, giving it an allegorical and spiritual sense.<sup>2</sup> Each professor sought to excel his rival in logical distinctions, divisions and sub-divisions. Each student vied with the other to pick flaws in his arguments; each sought to overwhelm the other and confuse his mind by subtle distinctions beyond his grasp. There was no exemption. No other road was open to the winning of honors; therefore should each be on the alert to answer every objection with all the vim possible. Should one refuse to take part in the debate, his silence would be imputed to ignorance or arrogance.<sup>3</sup> Disputation was the great field of triumph, and in consequence the greater part of the day was spent in disputation.

What was the daily regulation of university life? We may out-

<sup>1</sup> *Munimenta Academica*, vol. i., p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> He makes Alice the Blessed Virgin, and thus speaks of the name: "Hoc enim *Aalis* dicitur ab *a*, quod est *sine*, et *lis*, *litis*; quasi *sine lite*, sine reprehensione.—*Bibliothèque Nationale*, MSS., lat., 16,497.

<sup>3</sup> *De Disciplina Scholarium*, cap. iv., Migne ed., col. 1234.

line it as follows: The first lesson, as has been seen, was given in the morning early. The students then withdrew and arranged the matter of the last lesson, or prepared for the next, until the hour for dinner, which was generally at ten o'clock. At noon they carried on disputations, which, from the hour, were known as meridionals. At five there were repetitions of lessons and conferences, during which the scholars recited and answered questions put by the master. On Saturdays they had recapitulations and repetitions of the lessons given during the week. These were solemnly carried out under the supervision of the chief master of the school. There has been preserved for us a daily regulation of college life in Cambridge, which, though mentioned by Lever in the sixteenth century, runs back among college traditions as far as the memory of man goeth. We shall put it in the words in which Cardinal Newman expressed it. The student "got up between four and five; from five to six he assisted at Mass and heard an exhortation. He then studied and attended the schools till ten, which was the dinner hour. The meal, which seems also to have been a breakfast, was not sumptuous; it consisted of beef in small messes for four persons,<sup>1</sup> and a pottage made of its gravy and oatmeal. From dinner to five P.M., he either studied or gave instruction to others, when he went to supper, which was the principal meal of the day, though scarcely more plentiful than dinner. Afterwards, problems were discussed and other studies pursued till nine or ten, and then half-an-hour was devoted to walking or running about, that they might not go to bed with cold feet,—the expedient of heat or stove for the purpose was out of the question."<sup>2</sup>

But we are here trenching upon college discipline and college methods in the universities, a subject that shall claim our attention in another article. In the meantime, let us beware of losing sight of the true proportions of our mediæval universities in our eagerness to pry into details concerning them. Looked at in their historical setting, they stand out among the greatest creations of the spirit of Christian truth. They were the institutions of highest culture, the centres whence radiated the latest word in science and the most advanced wave of thought.

BROTHER AZARIAS.

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<sup>1</sup> "A penny piece of beef among four," is Lever's expression. *Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse*, Arber's Reprints, vol. iii., pp. 121, 122.

<sup>2</sup> *On Universities*, pp. 330, 331.