Vittorino Da Feltre: The Model Educator

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VITTORINO DA VEITRE
THE MODEL EDUCATOR

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V I T A

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CHAPTER I.

THE TIMES OF VITTORINO DA FELTRE.

It was in the year 1378 that Vittorino de' Rambaldoni was born in the little city of Feltre of the province of Belluno in Northern Italy. It was still the fourteenth century, and his work was to be performed in the fifteenth, two very significant facts. The age was one of lively activity in many directions, of wide and far reaching changes. After a period of perhaps five hundred years during which one of the strongest characteristics of European civilization was that of stability (3: 180 et sq.), Europe seems to have burst forth into over-exuberant life and change, as if she had finally realized the full power of her manhood and wished to shake off all restraint. It was not yet the time for external influences when discoveries and explorations would react on her history - that would come later - but there were many cogent internal forces at work which were even more potent and telling. There was much that was still Mediaeval in spirit, but there was much more that was certainly not Mediaeval. To understand the times we must turn back the pages of history for many centuries, but what is of far more importance, and of absolute necessity, is that we first rid ourselves of modern ideas and cease to look at things from modern viewpoints, lest we fall into the mistake of doing what Belloc calls "reading history backwards (3: 323)," a mistake which has made many an historian "unhistoric" especially when treating of the Middle Ages. For a Catholic to understand the spirit of those ages is comparatively easy, but those outside the Fold find the Middle Ages an insoluble puzzle.

The first thing to remember about the Mediaeval period is that Europe was one united Christendom. Not only was unity of faith an actual fact, but its absence was not even conceived of as possible. This is as true of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries as it is of those that preceded. In fact even the early so-called Reformers, burdened as they were with an extraordinary weight of self-will and self-opinion, dreamed only of reforming the whole Church, not of dividing its unity (3: 215). Even the thought that such a thing could be, was absolutely foreign to men's minds. Henry VIII., for instance, sought earnestly to maintain unity of doctrine, but the tide of unbelief could not be stemmed, once the waters had receded from the strong rock of authority. This unity of faith gave a certain family likeness to all the young nations of Europe. Strong in her well-ordered hierarchy, but above all in the energizing life of her teaching, in an age of disorder and readjustments, it is not surprising that the Church came to hold an unique position not only in spiritual matters but even
in things temporal. As Herder well expresses it, "the barque of the Church was freighted with the destiny of mankind (16: 203)." "Having lifted humanity up to a higher estate, she proclaimed herself its guardian, and, as such, carried the weight of her influence into every great question of public and private life; extended the circumference of her jurisdiction till it included questions of a purely civil character; and finally her Supreme Head, who, during this period, reached the zenith of his power, arbitrated between princes and subjects, and nations and people (1: 11,3)." Thus the exalted position of the Church was universally acknowledged, and in principle her authority was recognized by all, from the most powerful ruler to the lowest serf, so that her power for good was extraordinary.

However, we must not picture Mediaeval society as an ideal society devoid of all evil, for that was far from the actual condition. True, men were vigorous, and characters strong, but so also were passions. At times even "the Church, which is always influenced up to a certain point by contemporary civilization, endured many abuses and scandals. .... They proceeded sometimes from that corruption which is inseparable from the exercise of great power and the possession of great wealth; sometimes, and most frequently, from the invasions of the lay spirit and temporal power (21: 209)." But God was ever watchful, and at times of great stress He provided the man for the hour, such as the intrepid Gregory VII., who eradicated abuses from within and checked attacks from without. He "died full of an enormous achievement (3: 190)," and so complete was this achievement that the next two centuries produced a long list of giant Popes such as Innocent III., Honorius III., Alexander III., and a host of others. It is not to our purpose to dwell at length on the Mediaeval period, and so with a few last words of Montalembert, we shall pass on to the transition period which followed. "Weakness and baseness!* these are precisely the things which were most completely unknown to the Middle Ages. They had their vices and crimes, numerous and atrocious; but in them proud and strong hearts never failed. In public life as in private, in the world as in the cloister, strong and magnanimous souls everywhere break forth - illustrious character and great individuals abounded. And therein lies the true, the undeniable superiority of the Middle Ages. It was an epoch fertile in men - "Magna parent virum (21: 222).

It is of the life and work of one of these men, illustrious in attainment and great in character, that we are about to write. In him two periods met. His early life was spent in the closing years of the fourteenth century when the Mediaeval spirit was already showing signs of profound modification, but his work was wrought during the fifteenth, which, while we cannot call it modern, was yet vastly different in
spirit from the hundred years that preceded. It was fortunate for Vittorino de' Rambaldoni that he lived in a period between two great epochs for he retained all that was best and un tarnished in the old, while by his own efforts he assimilated all that was best in the new; and remaining unspoilt by success, by his great personality he was able to lead countless others on the road to learning, then strewn with many attractions, but likewise beset by many dangers. Vittorino was certainly a product of the Middle Ages by his deep faith and piety, and wonderful simplicity, even though he belonged to the Renaissance by his passion for books and learning.

In every change, three elements are brought into play, the antecedent element, the resultant, and the medium through which the one passes into the other. The first we have briefly touched upon, the second we shall mention later. We shall now cast a glance upon that transition phase through which Europe passed during the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries.

If we compare Europe at this time with what she was a few centuries earlier, we can realize what a tremendous work the Church had accomplished by the untiring efforts of her zealous workers. Instead of chaos and ignorance, we find high civilization and social order, organized governments, and active intercourse between peoples. Slavery had disappeared; the land was dotted with numerous schools and interspersed with renowned universities. Under the influence of the Church, the Mediaeval genius had produced the greatest works of scholasticism, the magnificent Gothic Cathedrals, the paintings of Giotto and Fra Angelico, the poetry of Dante, etc., etc. Moreover, and this fact we cannot ignore - already many were eagerly embracing the study of the ancient classic authors, for the minds of men had received new materials to work upon (1: 11,1064). The way had been prepared by long years of preceding and untiring labour. But now a wave of threatening changes, some good, some evil, was sweeping over the face of the world.

At various intervals imperial or royal power had withstood the authority of the Papacy, but the ultimate triumph had been on the side of the latter. A Henry IV. had submitted at Canossa, a Henry V. to the Concordat of Worms, a Barbarossa to Alexander III., but now royal perfidy reached its height under Philip the Fair by the sacrilege of Anagni, and, most significant, the outrage was followed neither by submission nor redress. This was the period of the residence at Avignon, the results of which were disastrous for the Church. The Papacy lost the prestige and the independent action it had enjoyed for centuries, and as the papal power sank, State interference in Church affairs grew proportionately greater. The
relations which had prevailed for centuries between Church and state were at an end; kings withdrew themselves and their kingdoms from her guidance and often threw off the restraint she had exercised upon their greed, ambition, and tyranny. The year of the birth of Vittorino da Feltre almost coincided with that of the return of the Papal court to Rome. Men began to hope for better times, but a more terrible storm was ahead, and burst forth almost immediately in the disastrous Western Schism, when, witnessing a succession of anti-popes, Christians were divided in their allegiance, and hardly knew to which individual as Pope they owed their obedience. Only a Divine institution could have braved that tempest which roared for forty years; but having Divine protection, the Church came forth unharmed. In the meantime, however, spiritual life was chilled, discipline was relaxed, reverence and loyalty to the Holy See were weakened, and loud protests and demands for reform within the Church were raised on all sides. Revolutionary ideas and heretical doctrines took root, and blossomed forth in the evil fruits of revolt against all authority both ecclesiastical and civil, as in the cases of Wyclif in England and Hus in Bohemia (1: 11, 819-873) (13: 11, Chapter I.).

Politically, too, Europe was astir, and in a process of transformation. Feudalism had done its work, but its day was over, for it was no longer capable of maintaining order in the new state of things. Kings were strengthening their positions, and central governments were superseding feudal relations. The task was not an easy one, and resulted in a marked tendency toward absolutism in all European countries. The family spirit which the Crusades had enkindled among the nations was dying out, and giving place to a decided national spirit, seen in the rise of the national languages and literatures. Private warfare was on the wane; it is true, and feudal strifes were disappearing; but only to be replaced by wider political struggles for independence or for greater control, as in the Hundred Years' Wars between England and France, the struggles between England and Scotland, or the constant warfare among the Italian cities, of which we shall write more at length in a moment, as more directly bearing on our subject.

This influence of powerful cities, not only in Italy but also elsewhere, especially in the thrifty Lowlands, and in Germany where the mercantile cities of the Hansa League governed their own affairs and dictated their terms, was a characteristic feature of the fourteenth century. For together with the political upheaval, a great change was also in progress in social conditions. Trade and commerce had been greatly stimulated by the Crusades, and industry had increased enormously in all lands. Gold and silver had been brought into
Europe, and through the powerful organization of the merchant and trade guilds a wealthy middle class had grown up, composed chiefly of merchants and artisans. These city burghers formed what became known as the "Third Estate" and were often very powerful in municipal affairs.

However, by the fifteenth century much of this municipal freedom had already disappeared, and we find the supreme power of the State concentrating more and more in the person of one sovereign prince. The change had already occurred in Italy where petty despots managed to wrest from the nobles and the burghers all political liberty, and then blinded them to their loss by the brilliancy and attractions of their courts. Tiraboschi finds it hard to decide whether these petty tyrants were more of a good or an evil. "Mentre essi per l'avidita d'ingrandirsi davano occasione frequente a' lor popoli di sospiri e di pianti, al tempo medesimo colla magnificenza degli edifici, collo splendor delle corti, colla protezione accordata alle scienze e alle arti, co'larghi stipendi assegnati agli uomini dotti e agli artefici indus­triosi, ne compensavano in gran parte i danni......Possiamo in diversi aspetti rappresentare lo stato d'Italia in questo secolo, ma non possiamo così facilmente decidere quali fosser maggiori, se i vantaggi o i danni." (32:VII., 2)

Thus the flourishing cities of Northern Italy bear a cachet all their own, and their position was a very important one as they were soon to become the leaders in the cultural movement which spread throughout Europe in the fif­teenth and sixteenth centuries. Genoa and Venice controlled the commerce of the Mediterranean and were therefore rivals on the sea. In the interior, Florence, Milan, and others cities grew to great wealth and importance. As long as the independence of these cities had been threatened by German imperial interference and tyranny, they had partly united to oppose the common enemy. Once the danger was over, however, after the extinction of the Hofenstaufens, they had turned their arms against each other, and for more than a century the bitter strife of the Guelfs and Ghibellines went on uninterruptedly in the Italian cities (13: 11, 10). One city would ruin another, and in turn be ruined by a third, while all the time party feeling within the cities was very bitter. As long as the Crusades had lasted they had given a noble purpose to the military spirit of the age, but now that they were over that spirit was spent in petty party struggles. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries most of the Italian cities were re­publics whose government was in the hands of their merchants and artisans. In the fourteenth, the fury of the civil wars had subsided, but free local government had also disappeared, and had been taken over by strong ruling houses or dynasties, such as the Visconti or the Sforza in Milan, the Della Scalas in
Verona, the d'Estes in Ferrara, and the famous Medici in Florence (15390-484).

In many cases, these rulers were real despots, whose position was often insecure in days of insignificant, but violent factional strifes. As one city became too powerful, others would league against her, only to dissolve the league soon afterward, and form still other combinations. Thus the smaller cities often became involved almost unwittingly in party strifes, and found themselves overnight under a different controlling power. The politics of the day were resumed in the fate of powerful leaders, often military commanders, but not necessarily so. Some showed remarkable statesmanship, and held their control mainly by strategic ability. We have only to open the pages of Machiavelli's Florentine History at random, and the same story of league and counter league confronts us. To take an example out of many, in the eight book we find that "On the one side the Pope and the Venetians were in league, and with them the Genoese, Sienese and other lesser Potentates. On the other, were the Florentines, the King (of Naples) and the Duke, with whom the Bolognese and many other Lords joined." (18: 402) If we turn the pages of this history backward or forward ever so little, we shall find practically the same parties in contest, but always in varying combinations. However, we must not think of the mass of the population as constantly in arms. On the contrary the burghers were very busy in manufactures and trade, for Northern Italy was then at the height of her commercial prosperity. The rulers often hired foreign adventurers to fight their battles, and these mercenary troops became a curse to Italy. The leaders, who were known as condottieri, frequently commanded bands of men on their own account, and then offered their services to the highest bidder. Some of the native Italians themselves joined the ranks of the condottieri, for the occupation was a profitable one. In time several of them managed to establish themselves in the first place of their city. To this class belonged Francesco Sforza, the ruling power of Milan, and also the first Gonzaga in Mantua.

But if the political, social, and economic world was progressing, in no direction was the advance so great as in the intellectual world, in which the changes reached the proportions of a literary revolution, - with good features and bad. At the dawn of the fifteenth century a wave of enthusiasm for the ancient classic literature was sweeping over Italy, and seemed to engulf all other interests, swamp­ ing them in the all-absorbing topic of the day. However, we must not suppose that this interest in the old writers of Greece and Rome burst upon Europe as a sudden flash of lightning. True, it then assumed tremendous importance and dimensions, but as Alzog says (and he substantiates his statement
with evidence), "There was not an interval throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, when the ancient classic authors were neglected." This is particularly true "in regard to the Roman classics, which formed the basis and guide of the course of studies included in the Trivium and Quadrivium." (1: 11, 1000 sq.) In the thirteenth century many translations of Greek authors, and especially of Aristotle, appeared; and there was even an attempt made to establish within the University of Paris a school for the study of Arabic and Greek literature (1: 11, 1000).

Certainly in the fourteenth century there was a marked advance and ardour in the pursuit of the study of the classics. Who can read Dante, and say that the Middle Ages were ignorant of the classics? No enthusiast of the Humanistic School could rival the great Florentine in his love and admiration for the "Mantuan bard." Petrarch spent the greater part of his life traveling from city to city, and monastery to monastery, searching for ancient monuments, collecting, transcribing, translating, correcting, and by his pen inflaming Italy, then Europe, with an ardent desire to study the old Roman models. Boccaccio was scarcely less ardent as a student, and he is said to have been the first to procure from Greece copies of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. In one of his lectures, Guizot remarks: "You know with what eagerness Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and all their contemporaries sought for the Greek and Latin manuscripts, and published and promulgated them, and what noise and transports the least discovery of this kind excited (14: 252)." To quote Hallam: "What Petrarch began in the fourteenth century was carried on by a new generation with unabating industry. The whole lives of Italian scholars in the fifteenth century were devoted to the recovery of manuscripts and the revival of philology. For this they sacrificed their native language, which had made such surprising shoots in the preceding age, and were content to trace, in humble reverence, the footsteps of antiquity. For this too they lost the hope of permanent glory, which can never remain with imitators, or such as trim the lamp of ancient sepulchres. No writer perhaps of the fifteenth century, except Politian, can aspire at present even to the second class, in a just marshalling of literary reputation. But we owe them our respect and gratitude for their taste and diligence (15: 647)." Throughout the earlier ages, the great hindrance to learning had been the scarcity of books, or of manuscripts, which had only been preserved from passing into utter oblivion by the labours of the monks. Hence those who copied and corrected manuscripts did a great service to learning, and some of these private scholars were indefatigable in their work. Tiraboschi tells us (32: VI., 194) that Niccolò Niccoli bequeathed to the republic of Florence, a library of eight hundred volumes, gathered by his personal efforts, and
that he was the first of his day to conceive the idea of a public library (Cf. also 4: 11, 617). The same author tells us that the discovery of an unknown manuscript was regarded almost as the conquest of a kingdom. "Lo scopimento di un libro per poco non si rimiro come la conquista di un regno (32: VI., 172)." Poggio acquired great fame for his discovery, in the monastery of St. Gall, of an entire copy of Quintilian and part of Valerius Flaccus (32: VI., 178). He was often engaged by the Sovereign Pontiffs in this task of resurrecting forgotten or neglected manuscripts, and was always one of the most enthusiastic of the philologists (4: 11, 457).

The flame of enthusiasm for the ancients was already burning very brightly, when it suddenly received new fuel by the coming of Greek scholars from the East. Long before the fall of Constantinople, even as far back as the fourteenth century, the Turks were really in possession of the greater part of the Eastern Empire, and many Greek scholars fled to the West bringing thither two valuable assets, viz., their own culture and many priceless manuscripts. At various intervals the most eloquent of the Greeks were sent on embassies to the Popes and the different Courts earnestly imploring for troops and finances to repel the Moslem. Although they were not always successful in their mission, owing to the selfish policies of the princes of Europe, they nevertheless made a deep impression upon their hearers by the grace and charm of their culture and manners. Many of the Eastern clergy were present at the Councils of Pisa, Constance, and Florence, when negotiations were carried on for the reunion of the Churches. Three of the Eastern Emperors journeyed in person to the West, to obtain aid against invaders. This influx of Greek scholars was a great stimulus to the study of Greek, as it provided not only the manuscripts, but teachers as well. One of the most renowned of these diplomats was Chrysoloras. Although he failed in his quest for money, he had no sooner returned home than Italy realized what an acquisition so distinguished a scholar would be to her schools, and the ambitious Italian cities began vying with one another to see who would make him the most advantageous offer, and secure him as a professor. Florence won the day, and in 1397 Chrysoloras began those lectures which drew to his side hundreds of students from all parts of the peninsula (32: VI., 1169) at (31: 11, 108).

Thus was launched that great cultural and educational movement which was gradually to spread from Italy through all the countries of Europe, "a movement of much more than literary significance, for it profoundly affected every phase of thought and life. Education profited by it in theory and in practice. The Renaissance began in Italy in a period notable for its great men, its university geniuses........The
Italians had always reverted to the past as the period of their national greatness; in literature they considered classic antiquity as their golden age. Their turning to it in the fifteenth century, with an enthusiasm which became almost a passion, was the climax of a tendency clearly discernible in Dante and Petrarch and only needing the thirteenth century and the progressive movements of the later Middle Ages to call it forth (20: 167)." In their enthusiasm, the votaries of the new learning thought that only by the pursuit of the classics could humanistic studies and interests advance, hence the name Humanists, by which they became known. This view of life, then, which made the human interest of man supreme, gave the new movement the name, Humanism, a term with a somewhat broad and undefined meaning, like its "twins" expression, Renaissance, which has been called "a question-begging word." This awakened interest in learning was to find a powerful auxiliary in the sudden advance in the art of printing. But printing was not a cause of the movement, only a vehicle of transmission. It supplied and helped to propagate the materials in demand, and the very intensity with which the supply was absorbed, showed the extent of the demand.

Let us listen to Tiraboschi: "Ecco dunque sin dal principio del secolo XV., tutta l'Italia rivolta ardentemente a ravvivare le scienze, e a richiamare dal lungo esilio le belle arti. Si ricercano in ogni angolo i codici, e s'intrappongono a tal fine lunghi e disastrosi viaggi; si confrontano tra loro, si correggono, si copiano, si spargono per ogni parte, si formano con essi magnifiche biblioteche, e queste a comune vantaggio si rendon pubbliche; si apron cattedre per insegnare le lingue greca e latina, e in ogni città si veggon rinomatis-simi professori d' eloquenza invitati a gara dalle università più famose, e premiati con amplissime ricompense. Le sventure de' Greci costringon molti tra essi a ricoverarsi in Italia; e si veggon in essa accolti con sommo onore, e ricercati dalle città e da' principi che fan loro dimenticare le sofferte disgrazie. ..... Si formano numerose accadanie, si tengono erudite adunanze, si propongono letterarii combattimenti, si raccolgon da ogni parte diplomi, medaglie, iscrizioni, ...... ogni cosa spira antichita ed erudizione. ...... I principi, i ministri, i generali di armata, i magistrati, i grandi, tutti si mostrano a gara o coltivatori, o almen mecenati e promotori delle scienze; ne credon magnifiche abbastanza le loro corti, se non danno in esse ricetto agli uomini dotti. A maggior felicità delle lettere si trova in Allemagna la stampa, ed ella e tosto ricevuta in Italia, sicche nel corso di pochi anni appena vi ha citta in cui non sia introdotta (32: VI., intro-
duction)."

But everything was not glorious in the new acquisition; in fact it was fraught with great dangers. The
study of pagan writings and ideals would eventually react on those who admired the pagans, and find expression in their lives. Hence this would only accentuate the disorders within the Church, and hasten the growth of evils which were to help bring about that terrible catastrophe of the sixteenth century, the Protestant Revolt. Thoughtful and far-sighted minds were not blind to the dangers, and this explains the apparent antagonism of some of the Popes, such as Paul II. and Calixtus III., to the growing movement. Others, like Nicholas V. and Pius II., themselves Humanists of a high type, foresaw the dangers, but also the possibilities; hence they sought to guide the movement into right channels, rather than to check it altogether. Meanwhile the movement grew to enormous proportions. "The classical school of that period was inflamed with admiration, not only for the writings of the ancients, for Vergil and Homer, but for the whole of ancient society, for its institutions, opinions and philosophy, as well as for its literature. .... Thus was formed that school of free thinkers which appeared at the commencement of the fifteenth century (14: 253)." "Through each one of its phases the two currents of heathen and Christian tendency are always clearly discernible, but the attentive observer cannot fail to recognize a considerable difference between its condition under Nicholas V. and under Paul II. In the time of Nicholas V. the genuine and noble Renaissance, which had grown up on Christian principles, and which, while embracing classical studies with enthusiasm, had made them subordinate and subservient to Christian aims and ideas, still held its own against the other tendency. Subsequently, a change took place, and the school which inclined to substitute the heathen ideal of beauty for the central sun of Christianity, became predominant. In the second generation of Humanists that one-sided devotion to classical antiquity, which led to a completely heathen view of life, gained considerably in extent and importance (22: IV., 36)." However, this darker side of the picture does not appear considerably in the early fifteenth century, the period of the work of Vittorino da Feltre. Despite the bitter rivalry and petty jealousy of the ambitious, and the avarice of a few, the early humanists, as a rule show a real love of learning and a desire for study, even at the cost of great hardship, privation, and suffering. Many journeyed to Constantinople in order to drink from the fountain-head of learning and culture. Excellent treatises on education were produced in the early Renaissance, and these show us the lofty ideals of the early humanist educators.

In an age when books were extremely scarce, instruction was, for the most part, necessarily oral. Hence in great measure it was through the Universities and schools already existing that the new learning first gained its footing, although libraries, literary societies and academic schools
were soon founded for its further promotion. Some of the old universities, such as Bologna and Pisa, were very conservative and for a long time held aloof from the new movement; but in general the Universities were the early means of spreading the new literary cult. It is true as Whitcomb says (35: 122) in comparing the progress of Humanism in Germany and in Italy, that "in Italy, the Universities were not centres of the new learning. Its leaders were rather to be found in the courts of princes or in the administrative bureaux of republics. This is largely due to the fact that the Universities of Italy had been for so long the great professional school of Europe. The 'bread-studies' were too firmly entrenched there to be driven into a subordinate position by mere cultural studies. In Germany.....the Universities were of later growth, and their interests less definitely determined." But we must not forget that before the establishment of the new schools, it was only at the Universities that the new learning could be acquired, and some of the Universities wielded a very powerful influence at the beginning of the Renaissance through the humanistic activities and renown of some of their distinguished professors. Of this number was the University of Padua with which we are particularly concerned, as the field for so many years of the activity of Vittorino da Feltre. To understand this influence, we must have a clear conception of the position and workings of the old Universities, those distinctive products of Mediaevalism. Hence a word about their origin will not be amiss; it is, in fact, necessary to our purpose.

The education of her children has always been one of the main cares of the Church, and she has spared no efforts or labours in its behalf. Thus teaching is one of the first duties of her ministers. True to her mission from the beginning, the Church gradually developed a well-defined system of education, which was very extensively diffused by the end of the eleventh century. This consisted in the main, of cathedral schools with their subordinate parish schools, and the monastic schools attached to each monastery. Thus wherever the Church penetrated, a school followed. Toward the close of the Mediaeval period other types of schools developed, along the same line, such as the chantry schools, guild schools, burgher schools in the towns, etc.; there even appeared the wandering scholar who set up a school temporarily in one place, and then moved on to another. As the first purpose of the school was the training of clerics and religious, naturally the study of the sacred sciences held a place of importance; but the seven liberal arts were not neglected. (Of course the language of the schools was Latin.) Elementary education consisted of instruction in reading, writing, music, simple computation, religious observances, and moral instruction; but the larger monasteries and cathedral schools offered more advanced instruction, including the seven liberal arts. These
were the trivium, grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics, and the quadri
vium, which comprised arithmetic, geometry, music, and astrono
my. Thus elementary education was within reach of the
majority, though higher education was confined to the few. To
quote Paulsen: "It seems safe to assume that, at the end of
the Middle Ages, the entire population of the town, with the
exception of the lowest classes, was able to read and write.
No statistics are available, but the most convincing evidence
that could be desired is afforded by the rapid development of
the art of printing into an important industry. This would
have been impossible without a universal demand for books (23:
31)."

The reforms of Hildebrand and his successors, the broadening
influence of the Crusades, the disappearance of serfdom, the natural development of the young nations, all tended to bring about a great religious and intellectual revival in the twelfth century, and this was manifested by the increased numbers who frequented the schools. The translation of the works of Aristotle, and the development of scholasticism within the schools gave an enormous impetus to the study of philosophy. Out of this intellectual growth the Universities sprang up spontaneously, the natural outgrowth of the existing institutions. "The idea of a university was not born into
the world in full panoply as Minerva from the brain of Jove.
No one set about consciously organizing for the establishment of complete institutions of learning. Like everything destined to mean much in the world, the universities were a natural growth from the favoring soil in which living seeds were planted. They sprang from the wonderful inquiring spirit of the
time and the marvelous desire for knowledge and for the higher intellectual life, that came over the people of Europe during
the Thirteenth Century (34:21)."

Teachers in some special subject began to
give oral instruction in that branch in a hall near the schools.
Soon great crowds of scholars eager for learning gathered,
and quickly the fame of these masters spread beyond the con
fines of their district and attracted students from far away.
Thanks to the Mediaeval custom of hospitality, and to the
respect in which learning was then held, a poor scholar al
ways found food and shelter on his travels in quest for learn
ing. As the renown of the lecturers was the great magnet
which drew scholars, it is not at all surprising to see the
different institutions acquiring a reputation for a special
subject, especially as different sections of Europe and differ
ent needs and requirements. Thus Paris became the center for
theology and philosophy, Salerno for medicine, Bologna for law,
etc. (8: XV., 189 et sqq). Salerno, the first in point of time,
eleventh century, owed its celebrity to the lectures of the
famous physician, Constantinus Africanus, especially when the
returning Crusaders spread broadcast the news of his skill. Bologna had early become the center of important law-schools which had been necessitated by the contests between the German Emperors and the free Lombard cities, especially during the struggle with Barbarossa. The Bologna law schools were made famous early in the twelfth century by the lectures of Irnerius on Roman law and jurisprudence, and these revived the influence of the Justinian code. Almost at the same time Gratian lectured on Canon law, and by his codification of the law of the Church in his "Decretum Gratiani," - the first text book on the subject, and for a long time, the only one - he awakened new interest in this separate branch of jurisprudence which was now considered as a special study. Thus Bologna became a great legal center, while Paris led in theology and dialectics through the fame of the learned William of Champeaux and the brilliant Abelard (9: Chap. CIII.).

But not all of the Mediaeval Universities grew out of establishments described in the foregoing paragraph. Some, such as Oxford and Padua "had their origin in a migration of masters and students from some great university, due to political rivalry between towns or countries, or encroachment by the local authorities upon the privileges of the schools. (19; 1,187)." These secessions from one control, and wholesale exodus of teachers, or students, or both, were not at all uncommon. There was still a third way by which universities came into existence, and that was by direct foundation, either by papal bull, imperial edict, or royal charter, sometimes by a combination of papal and imperial authority. All, however, desired papal affirmation, because only the papal authority could confer, together with the University degree, the "jus ubique docendi," or privilege of teaching anywhere in Christendom. The development and importance of the universities was greatly heightened by the privileges conferred on the authorities and the students, by Popes, Kings, and even the cities who considered it to their interest to support the universities, and even to maintain poor students at their own cost. It was for the help of needy scholars, and for the establishing of some kind of discipline that burses and colleges gradually came into being.

But we must not think of the Mediaeval university as a place where all subjects were taught, for very few possessed all the higher faculties, viz. theology, canon law, medicine, and philosophy which included the arts. The name by which the schools became known was "the studium generale." "A 'studium generale' was a higher institution of learning possessing at least one of the higher faculties and receiving students from all parts. "Universitas," whence our modern university, though sometimes meaning a studium generale, was not at first restricted to that use. It simply meant a whole group
of individuals, and it was applied indiscriminately to any corporate body of persons (19: 1, 188).*

To understand the organization of the universities we must remember the Mediaeval tendency toward association, for at bottom the Mediaeval universities were "guilds of masters, or students, or both, associations of like minded men engaged in the same pursuits, sharing in the same responsibilities, having the same interests at stake, united and organized in order to defend their common interests and to secure recognition of their association as a corporate body, with definite rights and privileges (19: 1, 188)." From the fact that sometimes the teachers and sometimes the students were the first to band together into a corporate organization, there arose two very definite types of Mediaeval Universities, upon which most of the later ones were modeled. In Bologna the students of the law schools were generally older men, more mature, often beneficed clergymen, and therefore capable of the management of their own affairs. Hence when they organized, it was as student bodies who elected their own rector, engaged the professors, and kept a large share in the control of the affairs of the school, although of course the professors retained authority in strictly academic questions, such as the right of promotion, conferring of degrees, etc. (8: XV. 190). Gradually as the institution grew in size and importance, and the city authorities undertook to pay the professors, the student-control greatly lessened. But Bologna remained the type of the democratic or student university, "upon which the universities of the South of Europe were modeled. Paris represented another type (the aristocratic type), that of the master university where the teachers were the controlling power in the corporation. There... the professors formed a corporate teaching body, and although the students were organized into Nations as in the University of Bologna, they did not administer the affairs of the institution (20: 137)." Paris became the type of many of the universities of the North, notably Oxford. In all universities, however, north or south, the chief administrative official was the Chancellor, or the representative of the Holy See.

It is hardly necessary to state that the universities exercised an enormous influence on the intellectual life, and thereby also on the social life of Europe. "Their organization and their traditions, their studies and their exercises affected the progress and intellectual development of Europe more powerfully, or more exclusively, than any schools in all likelihood will ever do again (26: 1, 5)." But the system was also fraught with many disadvantages, not the least of which was that "the great Catholic and monastic schools of former periods were forced out of existence by the monopoly. The ecclesiastical seminaries so necessary for the education
of the clergy ceased to exist in the fourteenth century (13: 11,126)." It was vain for the Cathedral schools to think of competing with the university, and the monks and Bishops were obliged to send their students to the universities. In many cases, the cathedral schools themselves were absorbed in the new universities of which they formed the nucleus. Of course very soon the Religious Orders and then the Bishops opened houses of their own in connection with the universities, where regular discipline was combined with the advantages of university education. The mention of discipline reminds us that this was a serious problem in the university towns; especially in the beginning, the sudden rise and rapid growth of the institutions, which occasioned the throwing together of thousands of students from every country and from every social condition, brought about much disorder. Excesses of all kinds, fights between students, or between townsmen and gownsmen were of frequent occurrences. James de Vitry who had himself been a student, tells us that among many the very sense of moral rectitude seemed to have been lost. "The university, in fact, presented the spectacle, at that time new in Christendom, of a system of education which aimed at informing the intellect without disciplining the soul. ....... In addition to the dangers incident to this state of uncontrolled liberty, were the more subtile temptations to pride and presumption which beset a man in the schools. (9: 369)." Of course the abnormal conditions of the beginnings were soon combated by both ecclesiastical and lay authorities, especially by the ability and labours of the great Franciscan and Dominican Doctors, but nevertheless the dangers and evils consequent on the University System were still very great in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Such then was the Europe, and in particular, the Italy into which Vittorino da Feltre was born. If we have dwelt upon prevailing conditions somewhat in detail, it is because we can not ignore the fact that circumstances and surroundings are potent factors in education, and must be reckoned with. If Vittorino was himself one of those strong personalities that can rise above circumstances and events, and say to them, not in words but in deed, "only thus far shalt thou touch me," yet we must remember that he was to train the youth of a nation in very special circumstances, - young men who were to play an important part and exert a strong influence in their country's destiny. As Pierre Marique states in the Preface to his History of Christian Education: "The history of education is nothing else, after all, than one aspect of the history of the race, and we understand it only to the extent that we see it in its social, political and cultural setting and realize the educative value of the various agencies which form the educational system of any period or nation."
CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE AND PREPARATION.

On the hilly slopes of the Alpine country in Northern Italy, beside the stream Colmeda, and at a small distance from Piave, some thirty or forty miles from Venice, the great commercial centre of the fourteenth century, lies the small, but picturesque old city of Feltre. Even in the Middle Ages it could boast of a large cathedral, dedicated to St. Lawrence, for the city had been the seat of a bishopric since early Roman days. Here in 1378 was born Vittorino de' Ramboldoni, one of the holiest and most distinguished men of his day (Cf. 26 :), one of whom Pope Eugene IV. was to say: "If my position as Sovereign Pontiff permitted it, I should rise from my throne to do homage to so great a man." But no glamour surrounded the birth of the future scholar, for his parents, though refined and of good family, were poor and lived in obscurity. His father was a notary at a time when troublous conditions were not favorable to this occupation. But Vittorino was to receive from his parents riches with which wealth can in no way compare, viz., principles of deep faith and a strong moral training, so essential to the building of character. Thus from the start he found himself in that environment which is best adapted to education - a good Christian home.

His father gave the lad his first lessons, then placed him in the Cathedral school, where he soon made rapid progress, thanks to his keen intellect and passion for books. Latin was the staple of all education in those days, and soon the boy so mastered the language that he was able to speak it with great correctness and fluency. We must not think of the young Vittorino as unsociable or as a mere book-worm (there were very few books in those days). On the contrary he was a real boy, we might even say a "good-mixer," and early showed signs of leadership. He had an indomitable will and a strong temper, which by his religious exercises he learnt to conquer, gaining fresh strength in the conflict. Yet, forceful as the boy showed himself, his predominant characteristics were those of the monk and the scholar, a love of books, a worship of beauty, and a spirit of solitude, and therefore we learn with some surprise that all Vittorino's childish dreams and boyish aspirations were directed toward a military career. But we must remember that those were warlike times, and often must the growing lad have heard men relate the stirring exploits of the renowned John Hawkwood, the English mercenary who fought the battles of many an Italian city. But it was especially the stories of the Crusades which fired this ardent nature. Outside the city walls and overlooking the city from the steep slopes of mount Misnea, was the Church of SS. Vittore e Corona, erected by the pious Crusaders of Feltre when they
returned from the first Crusade. Around the Church and especially in the grave-yard were many reminders of their glorious campaigns, and hither Vittorino loved to go with chosen companions to listen to tales of far-away lands, or to organize bands for sham battles, in which he always led the Christian host against the infidel, for he would never yield that post to any other.

In the meanwhile men in the large cities were becoming more and more enthusiastic over the pursuit of the classics; every new discovery of a manuscript only enkindled the flame anew and made it burn more brightly, until sparks were scattered broadcast and the flame spread far and wide from city to city and from city to country. The whole land was afire with the desire for learning, and the youth of the nation yearned for the privilege of going to the cities to frequent the universities, for in the beginning it was only there that their thirst for learning could be slaked. Feltre was not behind other cities of its size. Petrarch had spent the last years of his laborious life in Padua, and his influence had greatly improved the standing of the humanistic studies at the University of Padua (32: V., Part III.), so that it soon held one of the first places in the teaching of the liberal arts. From Padua the classic movement had spread throughout the cities of Northern Italy, and Feltre was then under the control of Padua. Vittorino listened eagerly to all the tales he heard, and he, also, yearned to satisfy his longing for learning, but his father had not the means to pay for his support during the years he would have to spend at the university. So the boy worked on patiently and cheerfully and in the meantime profited by every opportunity afforded him. This training in the school of poverty, privation, and hardship was to make him sympathetic by giving him an understanding of the difficulties of others.

Better prospects, however, were in sight. In 1388, by one of those kaleidoscopic changes so prevalent in that age and country, Feltre found itself no longer under the dominion of Padua, but annexed to the wealthy state of Venezia, a sharer in the commercial life of Venice. This advance in trade proved very beneficial to business, and in a few years Bruto de' Ramboldoni found himself in a position to send his son to the University of Padua. Thus at the age of eighteen, a new career was opening out for Vittorino.

Like most of the Lombard cities, Padua had long had its famous law schools, but it owed the foundation of its university to a wholesale secession of dissatisfied professors and students from Bologna, in 1222 (8: XI., 387). The new shoot grew in fame and importance until it almost rivalled the parent stock; it did not confine its teaching to jurisprudence, and
gradually established Chairs for all the higher faculties. We have seen how it soon excelled in the arts, owing to its distinguished professors, who were renowned humanists, ranking among the best Latinists of the day, — no mean praise in an age which prided itself on its Latinity.

When Vittorino arrived in Padua, the Chair of Rhetoric was occupied by Giovanni Conversino of Ravenna, who had been the pupil, then the secretary, of Petrarch (31: 11, 98). So great was his reputation for letters, that he drew crowds to his lectures; professors and students alike were proud to be numbered among his listeners. It was no uncommon thing in those days when men were eager lovers of learning, to find a master with a considerable reputation of his own, exchanging the professor's Chair for the student's bench, to attend the lectures of one more proficient than himself. It was in this way that many an eminent Latin scholar learned Greek, and vice versa.

Let us turn our gaze now to our young student making his first acquaintance with academic life. His earliest impressions were not of the glory of the learning that surrounded him, nor of the sweets of the life of study upon which he was entering; he was conscious only of disgust for the living conditions in which he found himself, — those of a Mediaeval University town which had been suddenly called upon to lodge more than it could accommodate. Vittorino was not fastidious about his board or his lodging — his means had always been scanty and he was accustomed to habits of frugality. But he did seek cleanliness and a certain amount of privacy, and these were not to be found. Worse yet, the lives of the students were far from exemplary; drinking, fighting, gambling, stealing, and other vices were common. Vittorino's heart sank, and he almost drew back from his undertaking. He longed to withdraw from the world, and wondered if it were God's will that he should enter religious life. In the meanwhile he determined to remain at Padua, and to omit none of his pious practices. He recommended himself to the great patron of the city, and soon St. Anthony's basilica became his chief refuge when he desired to get away from the turmoil around him.

Vittorino had, as yet, no definite plans for the future which was still God's secret. In a certain measure, his very poverty was to be a means by which this future was to be revealed, and his real mission in the world discovered. Life in a university town was expensive, and it was impossible for him to acquire the books he coveted. But he possessed an invaluable asset in his thorough knowledge of the foundations of the Latin language, and his quick intuition made him perceive that the lack of this very thing was what retarded many another scholar. He soon lent his services to less gifted
students, and though gain was never a foremost consideration with him, through necessity he began to accept fees for his services. His talents and exemplary life had already attracted to him the attention of the best element in the university, both among professors and students, and now his ability and success as a teacher soon brought him a number of pupils. His work as an educator had begun; the sphere of his influence had broadened and would continue to do so as the years went on. His own moral and intellectual worth, and his knowledge of conditions drawn from experience and observation, well qualified him to lead the little band who looked up to him, not only as a tutor but also as a guide.

In the meanwhile his own studies were progressing, for he applied himself to them assiduously. Friendships were being formed which were to continue through life. His professor of rhetoric, Conversino, whom we have already mentioned, soon noticed the happy influence Vittorino exercised over his little band of followers; the master, too, was attracted to the young scholar and there began a friendship which was to be very helpful to the student. Vittorino himself was to none drawn more closely than to young Guarino of Verona, the famous Greek scholar who was then at Padua satisfying his thirst for knowledge. The two men had many traits in common, not the least of which was their love of learning, one excelling in Latin and the other in Greek. This difference was to bring them all the closer, since they were later to supplement one another in their work, - that day, however, was yet far away. In the meanwhile Vittorino continued his studies under Barzizza, who had succeeded Conversino as professor of rhetoric. Here his closest companion was Paolo Vergerio, to whom he was attracted by similarity of tastes and aspirations. "It was to... Barzizza that Vittorino owed his real training and the exquisite polish of his Latinity... Under Barzizza (students) made rapid progress, for it was he who first established a sound basis for the teaching of Latin by adopting the writings of Cicero as a model, not to be carefully imitated, but rather to be assimilated in such a manner as to secure a living reproduction of Cicero's style (30: 62)."

Vittorino easily gained the degree of Master of Arts which qualified him as a teacher, and followed it up with the doctorate. He devoted himself also to the study of Philosophy, Theology, and Canon Law, and brought his knowledge of each study to proficiency, for he did nothing by halves. There was one science, however, in which he was entirely deficient, viz., mathematics, and this lack he determined to rectify, at any cost. When the famous mathematician, Pelacane, came to Padua, drawn thither by his desire of gain, Vittorino did not have the means to pay his exorbitant prices; but he offered his services as footman in the master's home, in the hope
Vittorino's reputation for scholarship was now established, and once again his sphere of activity and of influence was enlarged, for he opened a school of his own, while continuing his lectures at the University. As Buckhart says of him: "He was one of those men who devote their whole life to an object for which their natural gifts constitute a special vocation (5: 213)." He had found his calling; he was henceforward to be a teacher of men. He was now no mere tutor, but his increased means allowed him to develop his private school in which he prepared students for their University courses. But he had very definite views on the first prerequisites for the success of a school and especially of one in an University town. Hence he was very strict in the curriculum of his boarding-school, as in fact he was to be through life. He knew the dangers attendant on the life of a collegian, and he tried to safeguard his pupils by moral training and regularity of life. Religious exercises were not to be neglected, and daily attendance at Mass for all was part of his program. One of the principles to which he adhered firmly, was that the number of pupils accepted was to be limited to the power of accommodations, and no thought of gain could make him swerve from this decision. This principle was considered imperative also by the great nineteenth century educator, Edward Thring, in building up his school at Uppingham, and the wisdom of it is clearly seen by every educator who has the welfare of the individual pupil at heart.

Vittorino had now been carrying on his work very successfully for several years, and had won the respect and love of all his pupils, when an opportunity was offered him of supplying the one great lack in his own accomplishments, his complete ignorance of Greek; there was no Chair of this language in the University of Padua. His former friend, Guarino, whose love of Hellenic culture had drawn him to follow the famous Chrysoloras first to Florence, then to Greece, had now returned and had started a school of his own in Venice. Very soon, however, he perceived that he was greatly handicapped by his deficiency in Latin. So he betought himself of his gifted friend, and offered him a share in the work of the new school. The two masters would share their gifts, each giving to the other what one was so qualified to give, and the other so eager to receive. Vittorino was at first undecided, and it is needless to say that the authorities of the University did their
to retain him, while his pupils besought him not to abandon them. At last, however, he resolved to accept Guarino's offer; and so great was the esteem of his students that many decided to accompany him, and continue as his pupils in Venice.

The school in Venice prospered greatly during the five years of its existence, for its two leaders were among the most renowned scholars of the day. Moreover, they were of one accord with regard to disciplinary matters, and here as at Padua Vittorino held his pupils to a well-ordered, regular life. A professorship was a remunerative occupation in those days, and Vittorino now found himself in easy circumstances. But money is only worth what it can procure and he desired it only for two purposes - that he might purchase the precious MSS. to be had in Venice, and that he might be liberal in dispensing charity. Throughout his whole career poor students were the objects of his special solicitude, and the hospitals his favorite haunts outside of school hours.

Guarino's school might have continued much longer, if a plague in 1420 had not scattered many of the scholars. The two masters now parted, each to open an institution of his own, the one in his native Verona, the other in Padua. Vittorino was warmly welcomed at the University where he again took up his work in Latin and Mathematics; and none gave him a more cordial reception that his former teacher, Barzizza. When two years later the latter resigned the Chair of Rhetoric, Vittorino was unanimously chosen to succeed the great master, and after much hesitation he finally accepted; however, he still maintained his private establishment. During the year that he held his exalted position as Professor of Rhetoric, the fame of his scholarship increased enormously, for there was no phase of the Liberal Arts in which he was not a sure authority. Crowds thronged his lecture room, and he enjoyed extraordinary popularity. Through it all, he remained unspoilt and as simple in his habits as ever; his exemplary life was a living sermon to all who witnessed it.

True as all this was, Vittorino's power to influence others was very limited. Life around him was a swiftly flowing stream of corruption, and single handed he could not stem the strong current (31: 11,291). All he could hope to do was to strengthen his hold upon individuals, and by arming them with strong principles, to prevent them from falling victims to the seductions of vice, which led to destruction. Even in this work he was handicapped, for the very ones he was helping in his own boarding-house, seemed to be carried away by the almost irresistible tide of wickedness. One of the great deficiencies of the University system in contrast to the Mediaeval system was the lack of any close tie between master and pupil, the total absence of personal intercourse between the one teach-
ing and the one taught, and the consequent loss of one of the most powerful means of education. Speaking of the university of the day Mother Drane says: "Its work was done in the lecture room, where alone the master exercised any authority, and the only tie existing between him and his disciples was the salary paid by one party and received by the other (9: 369)." In his Ecclesiastical History, Fleury says: "The university doctors were doctors, and they were nothing more."

Thwarted in his purpose of really educating, instead of merely imparting knowledge, Vittorino became disgusted with his surroundings. Fame meant nothing to him, save inasmuch as it opened to him new channels through which he could exert his influence for good. When he saw his real purpose in life checked, he resolved to give up his university career forever, and betake himself to more congenial surroundings. No earthly motive could shake his resolve, and he determined to go to Venice, where he was already so well known and respected. There pupils soon flocked to him in great numbers, and he organized a school according to his own methods and ideals, and it was immediately in a flourishing condition. The following year, however, 1423, the offer was to come, which was to open to Vittorino his real life work, for which all that had preceded was but the preparation, but a preparation which had eminently fitted him for the task he was so gloriously to accomplish.

Before we follow him to Mantua, whither he was called by a princely ruler to organize a Court School, let us pause a moment to consider this new type of school then becoming so prevalent in Italy - that literary school established for the furtherance of the humanistic studies, as the new learning was called. Burckhardt tells us that "there were Latin schools in every town of the least importance, not by any means merely as preparatory to higher education, but because, next to reading, writing, and arithmetic, the knowledge of Latin was a necessity; and after the Latin came logic..... This school system, directed by a few distinguished humanists, not only attained a remarkable perfection of organization, but became an instrument of higher education in the modern sense of the phrase (5: 213)." Princes and magistrates vied with each other in attracting to their school the most learned scholars, and in procuring the most valuable books for their newly-established libraries. "Never was there a time in the world's history," says Symonds, "when money was spent more freely upon the collection and preservation of MSS. and, when a more complete machinery was put in motion for the sake of securing literary treasures. Prince vied with prince, and eminent burgher with burgher, in buying books. The commercial correspondents of the Medici and other great Florentine houses, whose banks and discount offices extended over Europe and the Levant, were in-
structed to purchase relics of antiquity without regard for cost, and to forward them to Florence (31: 11,139)."

The principal cities of Italy had their Academies, in imitation of the Greek Academy, in whose groves Plato taught his philosophy. These were the centre of literary activities, and the meeting places of men of letters. Perhaps one of the earliest institutions of the nature of a literary academy, although it did not bear the name of Academy, was that established at the Convento del Sancto Spirito in Florence, where literary and scientific discussions were held, for both Augustinian friars and Camaldolese monks took a great part in the literary movement of the day (9: 523) (32: 151-153). This convent "became the centre of an learned society, who met there regularly for disputations (31: 11,102)." To this period belongs, also, the foundation of the great libraries, such as the Vatican Library begun by Nicholas V., the library of the Duke of Urbino, and that of the Medici of Florence.

The most renowned academy, the first to bear the name and the one which served as a model for others, was the Academy of Florence, founded by her merchant-prince Cosimo de' Medici, and further developed by his grandson Lorenzo the Magnificent. Thither resorted Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, the young prodigy of learning, Poliziano, Machiavelli, and the English student Linacre. But besides Florence, there were many cities of Italy where individuals and social circles devoted all their energies to the support of humanism and the protection of the scholars who lived among them. The correspondence of that period is full of reference to personal relations of this kind. The feeling of the instructed classes set strongly and almost exclusively in this direction (5: 222)." The Pontiffs Eugene IV., Nicholas V., Leo X., and others were munificent patrons of letters. Alfonso the great of Aragon, King of Naples was a most enthusiastic friend of men of letters. One of the greatest private patrons was the Churchman, Bessarion, who had formerly belonged to the Greek Church as Archbishop of Nice. "His house at Rome became a sort of academy, and in it he trained a number of scholars, both Greek and Latin, not only in learning, but in piety and good manners; for Bessarion was as remarkable for his courtesy and virtue as for his erudition (9: 605)." At his death he bequeathed his great library to the republic of Venice.

Thus all the potentates of Italy, great and small, thought it imperative to establish a princely Academy in connection with their Courts. Two of these institutions "unique of their kind (5: 213)." were established for the education of the children of the princely houses, but before long attracted students from distant lands. The one, founded by Niccolo d'Este at Ferrara, in 1429, and conducted by Guarino
of Verona, made of Ferrara one of the most cultured courts of Italy. The other had preceded it by several years, and had been established by the Lord of Mantua, Gian Francesco Gonzaga, under the direction of Vittorino de' Ramboldoni. Gonzaga had first invited Guarino to take charge of the school which he desired to establish at the Court of Mantua, but Guarino could not leave Verona at the time, so he recommended for this position his friend, Vittorino, then at the head of his prosperous school in Venice. After much deliberation Vittorino accepted the offer made to him, closed his own school, and taking with him some of the boys who desired to follow him, set about his great life work. One of the strongest incentives which induced him to abandon a successful enterprise for an uncertain undertaking was the thought of the opportunity for doing good, which was opening to him, but even he could hardly realize the full significance of the task before him. Thus the last and most important phase of his glorious, though unpretentious, career was commencing.
In the fourteenth century the city of Mantua was the possession of the House of Gonzaga, then only rising to prominence, but later to become illustrious through a long line of Churchmen, scholars, and statesmen, all to fade into the background before the glory of the young boy saint of the sixteenth century, Aloysius of the Company of Jesus. The Gonzagas were originally condottieri who by their military genius, power of strategem, and statesmanlike qualities had possessed themselves of the first place in the city, and had established themselves as princes of undisputed rank. The present lord was a true descendant of his ancestors, for in him the soldier and the statesman were well combined, and while ruling his own state he was often called upon to fight Venice's quarrels with the Lords of Milan, also his own hereditary rivals. His palace was magnificent, and his Court one of regal splendour, and now that it was time for his children to be educated, he desired a tutor worthy of the position. Not being able to procure the services of Guarino, he sent a trusted messenger to Vittorino, inviting him to the Court of Mantua. Vittorino accepted only on condition that he would be complete master of his school, and that others besides the princely children, might be admitted to it. The request was granted, the school at Venice broke up, and the master left with a band of followers who were to form the nucleus of the new school. But Vittorino did not bind himself yet to the service of the Gonzagas, and he was determined to continue in it only if he could manage the school according to his own views, and accomplish the good he desired. "His formal statement of his conditions contained the clause that nothing unworthy should be required of him, and that his employer's life should be such as to command respect (30: 73)." It was not for lack of other offers that he was accepting this one; for so great was his renown that any school would have considered it an honour to have him; but here he saw a greater opportunity for doing good.

Thus in the autumn of 1423 Vittorino and his little company left Venice for Mantua, and the new tutor repaired immediately to the palace of the lord to make arrangements for the school, to make the acquaintance of his future pupils and, as it were, to take stock of the resources which would be placed at his service. With quick powers of observation, the keen eye of the master took in the surroundings at a glance, for if he was eminently "a man of letters," he was just as truly a "man of the world," or rather an understander of human nature, because he was first of all, a lover of human nature. He saw much that was promising, but also
much that was not. In the luxury, idleness, and flattery to which the princely family had been accustomed, there were many demoralizing influences, and young as the children were, they were spoilt, so that a great part of their early training would have to be undone, before the edifice of real education could be begun.

The oldest child was a daughter, but girls were not to be excluded from the prospective institution. Margherita was about thirteen, and the most promising of the three Gonzagas then to be confided to Vittorino. Her modest and intelligent bearing pleased him from the first, especially in contrast to the impression made by her brothers. The story of the meeting between the heir and his future tutor is well known, but can bear repetition. Louis was seated lazily on a soft couch, and propped up by pillows, he was listening with indifference to the flatteries of his already obsequious companions, while he regaled himself with sweetmeats, which he never thought of sharing. It was plain from his appearance that eating was the main business of the day, and munching sweetmeats, his usual pastime. This boy of ten was so fat that he could move only with difficulty. His younger brother, Carlo, was as opposed to him in appearance as in temper, for he was as thin and overgrown as the other was fat and undergrown, and as choleric and quarrelsome as the other was lazy and dreamy.

Vittorino observed and listened, but refrained from speaking. One of this first observations was that if firmness would be required with the children, it was first of all imperative with the parents, who, as is often the case today also, needed training as much as their offspring. The Lady Paola was a noble and intellectual woman (32: 72), but had been brought up in the superficial and luxurious court of Rimini. Her husband was an enlightened man with a certain amount of culture, but in him the fierce condottiere spirit was not entirely spent. The new tutor saw the necessity of speaking plainly and of holding firmly to every point which he deemed essential, and he was not the man to draw back before obstacles. He recognized at once that the Court with its extravagance, excitement, and dissipation was not the place to rear children, and that radical changes would have to be made.

He spoke his mind frankly, first to the father and then to the mother. Gian Francesco had sense enough to see the justice of the tutor's demands, and he was won by his absolute straightforwardness and disinterestedness. Moreover, he was determined not to lose so eminent a scholar, whose very name would add lustre to any Court, so he granted Vittorino full liberty in his plans, and free access to the treasury. The Lady Paola was even more capable than her husband of under-
Vittorino's views and of seconding his desires; and so it was agreed that the changes should be introduced at once, though gradually. Both realized the impracticability of a school within the Palace walls, so Lady Paola offered to give for the purpose a near-by palace, which had served as a vacation house for the Gonzaga family. That no time might be lost Vittorino was conducted thither, the very next day.

Even a man more fastidious for the best than Vittorino, could but be charmed by the spot offered him for his school. A beautiful and spacious villa situated on a small elevation, overlooked the River Mincio, where the river broadened almost to a lake; extensive meadows stretched out on the gradual incline from house to river. It had been called the "House of Pleasure," not only because of the beauty of its situation and surroundings, but also because of the care which Gonzaga had taken to adorn it with everything that could contribute to the pleasure of its inmates. It contained large and airy rooms, long galleries and arcades painted with frescoes, and around it stretched delicious gardens, meadows, and woods well stocked with game (32: VI., 72). The view from the rear of the house was magnificent, revealing all the possibilities of this ideal location. Vittorino was too much of a lover of the beautiful not to appreciate the scene before him, and too much of an educator not to know that although beauty of environment may not be essential to education, it is yet a powerful factor. He showed himself very satisfied with the place, and ready to begin at once.

Vittorino was enchanted, it is true, with the estate provided for him, but the house and its customs had to undergo many changes before he considered it suited to his work. All that tended to foster habits of idleness and self-indulgence was discarded little by little. The luxurious furniture was replaced by a more suitable kind, the elegant draperies disappeared; for the frescoes were substituted others representing children at prayer, at study, or at play; the grounds were enclosed to insure privacy. Then the inexorable master attacked over-indulgence in eating, for he had a deplorable example of this defect in Louis Gonzaga. Princely banquets were reduced to a reasonable limit; sweetmeats were forbidden, and there was to be no eating between meals; the meals became gradually simpler though always abundant and varied; at first they had to be frequent, but soon they became fewer. Vittorino went even further. In order that the children's attention might not be concentrated on their food, he introduced pleasant conversation or interesting stories during meal time; at other times there was reading, or again he would provide music or singing to interest them (31: 11, 292).

Great care was also taken with regard to the
servants and persons around the house, and especially with the matron in charge. Fortunately Vittorino was ably seconded in this task by Lady Paola who did her best to procure the right persons; if, in spite of all precautions any proved unsuitable, they were discharged at once. Vittorino strove also to procure trustworthy teachers to assist with the classes, and in the beginning some of the older boys who had come with him from Venice helped him with the teaching.

However, we must not think of Vittorino as a hard and tyrannical schoolmaster, or of his school as a dismal place, for it was the very opposite. The villa had been called the "Pleasure House," and now its name was changed to the "Pleasant House," the "Casa Giocosa," because of the spirit of joy and happiness which was to reign within its walls.

The first pupils, of course, were the Gonzaga children, and the boys whom he had brought from Venice. The latter were to be a powerful auxiliary to him in the beginning because as he himself had trained them they were already somewhat formed to his methods. The children of the Court followed their young masters, and very soon all the first families of Mantua desired to have their children become members of the Court school. Vittorino accepted all who asked admission, vigilantly studied each one individually, and knowing child-nature, was not at all surprised at their faults. But when he noticed any whose moral character had been so injured as to make them a danger to their companions, he dismissed them at once. No matter what the position of the parents, he remained inexorable, for he was determined to surround his children with the best of influences. Knowing the lasting power of early impressions he preferred very young children to older ones, so that he could mould them to good habits before they had had time to be spoilt. Thus he asked to take in hand the education of the fourth Gonzaga also, little Gian Lucido, then only three years old. When two other children were later added to the family circle, Cecilia and Alexander, they were confided to him from their tenderest years, and his results with these younger children was well-nigh marvelous. Lest any outside influence should mar his work he wanted the children to reside at the school and be given over completely to his care (31: 11,294). "The pupils boarded at the school or near enough to be under his direct supervision (19: 11,44)."

Later, when the reputation of the school spread even to distant lands, powerful families desired to have their children educated in the school of Mantua for it became "the chosen school of the aristocratic world (5: 214)." Renowned scholars like Guarino, Poggio, and Filelfo also sent their children hither. But none of these were so welcome to
the master, as his favourites, the promising sons of poor parents (26: 165-166). "Besides these pupils (the sons of the wealthy) came others, whose instruction Vittorino probably held to be his highest earthly aim, the gifted poor, often as many as seventy together, whom he supported in his house and educated 'per l'amore di Dio', along with the high-born youths who had learned to live under the same roof with untitled genius (5: 214)." Even in his busiest days he still found time for his favourite work of mercy, to visit and console the sick in hospitals, and at other times visited the prisons also. He founded among his noble pupils an association of charity, for enabling poor scholars to pursue their studies with greater facility, and this he did, not merely as a means of carrying out his favourite work of charity, but yet more with the view of training the sons of the Italian noblesse from their earliest years to care for the inferior classes, and to give to the poor out of their abundance (9: 602).

Still another category of pupils, small in number it is true, but not in importance, were the young girls admitted to the school. These were a group of young ladies, companions of Margarita Gonzaga, whose parents desired to have them learn Latin and Greek with their brothers (Cf. 33: Book 11, Chap. 9). In letters, they followed the classes with the boys, but the feminine arts were not neglected. Certain ladies of the Court were chosen to teach them embroidery, tapestry-work, etc., and music was also cultivated. Mary Agnes Cannon's words on the education of the women of the Renaissance, might well have been written of Vittorino's establishment.

"In the humanistic schools thus founded, while boys and girls were taught side by side and by methods practically uniform, yet in the general choice of subject matter a marked distinction was made between them........ Apart from the attention bestowed upon each girl in accordance with her special gifts or deficiencies, the humanist took into consideration, not only her future mission in Renaissance society, but her personal vocation as well, and to this end ministered to her intellectual and moral needs....... The new system first provided for the girl a basic training in the classics, identical with that of the boy, as a means of similarly developing her faculties, and imparting to her the necessary power in the acquisition of further knowledge. This end reached, the nature and degree of exercise in other forms of mental activity should be determined by her peculiar needs (7: 30)."

Vittorino was to his scholars a father even more than a teacher, "Looking out for their clothing and food, sharing in their games and pleasures, never relaxing in his close supervision of their conduct. Himself a practical and devout Catholic, he believed that religion was an essential element in any plan of education. The atmosphere of the
'Pleasant House' was a thoroughly Christian one. By precept and still more by example, Vittorino endeavoured to develop in his pupils the practice of all the duties which religion commands and the virtues it inspires (19: 11,44)." He impressed upon them the truth that "the school-room must be to them a holy place," but he also saw to it that there was plenty of recreation and amusement of the right kind. Thus he had "embarked upon his biggest, most enduring enterprise, and founded a kind of Utopian College, half learned, half Socratic, a union of Porch and Thebaid (29: 50)," but preeminently Christian in character, developing the student on all sides, and fitting him for any position in life, by equipping him with a liberal education based on solid foundations.

The pupils' day was mapped out very carefully, but it allowed a certain latitude for the individual needs. Morning prayers were said in common, and all attended daily Mass, which was followed by a short instruction on religious duties. The morning was spent in the class-room, but the mid-day meal was preceded by an hour's recreation which was always taken out of doors, without concern about the weather; from this play time no one could absent himself. Siesta followed dinner, and then work was resumed. This was the time for private classes, study, original work, and what we should call elocution. In the evening there was another hour of amusements, and all serious topics were banished from the recreation hours, for the master believed that work and play had each its proper time and place.

The plan of studies was, of course, based on the humanistic culture of the day, and Latin and Greek were the groundwork, though not indeed the entire curriculum of studies. Much was retained of the old Mediaeval course, but the subjects were taught in a new way, and with a new end in view. Latin had always been the language of the schools in every part of Europe; however, it had not been studied for its own sake, but merely as a channel of thought and expression, and as a necessary aid to theology, philosophy, or dialectics. Now it was studied for its own sake, as the best means to develop the mind, and acquire culture and a literary style. The study of Greek had been exceedingly limited, now it was given a preeminent place.

"In the Mediaeval schools Latin had been studied for its practical value in life and to some extent its disciplinary value, as a preparation for the study of philosophy, law, medicine, and theology. In the 'Pleasant House,' as in every humanistic school of the period Latin and Greek were chiefly studied for their intrinsic value, both as to form and content. The study of grammar was limited to the minimum requirements for the correct use of the language and
the understanding of the Latin or Greek text. Great importance
was attached to Latin conversation, and its practice began
very early; much attention was given to clearness and correct­
ness in articulation, accent and rhythm, and the vocabulary of
the pupil was constantly increased through the memorizing of
selections from the classic authors. Due to the fact that
there was still a great scarcity of text-books - the invention
of printing took place after Vittorino's death - a goodly
amount of dictation had to be made by the teacher. The process
was a slow one of course, but it was not without its own mer­
its; it enabled the teacher to expurgate at will the pagan au­
thors that he used; it afforded constant practice in Latin and
Greek spelling and compelled a far better attention to de­
tail than the use of a text-book would have made possible.....
The chief characteristics of the author were pointed out, as
also those features of vocabulary, construction and diction
which deserved to be imitated.....The immediate purpose of
the study of the classics was the acquisition of a good style,
both in speech and writing (19: 11,45)."

Much success of the method depended upon the
teacher's power of presentation, interpretation, selection,
and illustration, but Vittorino had himself been well trained
in the school of Barzizza, and he spared no efforts to do the
same for his scholars. A special study was made of the Fathers
of the Church, especially of St. Augustine in Latin and St.
Chrysostom in Greek. Livy was his favourite among the Latin
historians, Virgil among the poets. We are told that when
he wished to make a passage of Virgil more impressive and in­
teresting he would sometimes take his scholars out "to Pietole
which has been identified as probably the village of Andes
in which according to Donatus Virgil was born, and here in the
shady groves Virgil would be read and discussed, and then there
would be games and a return to the castle (33: 315)."

Special emphasis was laid on a good delivery,
so that reading and reciting aloud had an important place in
the afternoon's work. Original work was also greatly en­
couraged. In order that a graceful and easy style might be
natural, the pupils were taught to speak Latin and Greek from
their tenderest years, even in the nursery when possible. "The
art of composition was taught very early in the course. The
preliminary steps were to memorize certain formal phrases, and
to read aloud selected passages for acquiring a vocabulary
and a sense of rhythm. Translations of Greek passages formed
the first exercises, and later original compositions on set
forms were demanded. The advanced students could versify with
facility (20: 177)." Is it any wonder then, that from this
school went forth orators and statesmen whose discourses called
forth praise and admiration?
Although Vittorino personally directed the studies in Latin, Philosophy, and Mathematics, in other branches his work was that of supervision rather than of direct instruction. He sought to obtain the best possible teachers, and some of his poor students became very helpful and efficient assistants. He never considered himself proficient enough in Greek to teach the language, and tried to procure scholars from the East, for it was his belief that only a native was qualified to teach a language satisfactorily. He obtained the distinguished scholars Theodore Gaza and George of Trebizond, who were still unspoilt and satisfactory while at Mantua (32: VI., 1189). After Latin and Greek, perhaps mathematics was the subject which received the most attention; but other subjects were not neglected. "Arithmetic, geometry, algebra, logic, dialectics, ethics, astronomy, history, music, and eloquence were all taught at Mantua and frequently by special teachers; for as the school grew in numbers and departments of study, specially trained instructors in logic and philosophy, masters in painting, music, dancing and riding, copyists and tutors, became associated with the teaching staff (20: 176)."

While intellectual life was so vigorous in the "Casa Giocosa," physical training also received careful attention, for Vittorino was strongly desirous of developing "sound minds in sound bodies," and so he watched with a paternal interest over the health of his pupils. He knew that the hours of recreation would take nothing from the studies, but on the contrary would prove beneficial to them. Moreover, many of the pupils were destined for a military career and for them physical training and power of endurance were absolutely necessary. Hence great importance was given to the field games, in which all were to participate; and there were special exercises adapted to individual needs and tastes. Vittorino shared in all these athletic exercises, and there as elsewhere preached by example as well as by precept. His presence, far from putting a check upon boyish ardour, was only an incentive to work for victory, for the master was a leader in athletics as in other things. There was riding and boating, tennis and ball-games, races and shooting, fencing and wrestling. Then at times mock-battles were organized, and great was the shouting and enthusiasm as the winning side advanced to victory (Cf. 31: 11,293).

In the summer there added opportunities for sports and physical training, and the ordinary routine was interrupted. In those days the school did not break up for vacation in our sense of the term, nevertheless there was relaxation from arduous study, and there was change. The entire establishment, - master, pupils, and servants - all moved from the residence at Mantua, to another castle and estate of the Gonzagas at Goito, a village some twelve miles north, near
The younger ones were conveyed in boats up the River Mincio almost to its lake source; the older pupils on horseback accompanied them along the shore. The morning's ride brought them to an enchanting spot among the mountains, for if the Italian Lakes and surroundings have not all the majesty of their Swiss neighbors, perhaps they surpass them in picturesqueness.

From Goito there were many excursions into the neighboring country; sometimes the older pupils even went as far as Verona, and that was a red-letter day for the happy privileged ones, who never tired relating its delights and advantages. There was also the yearly visit to the famous Camaldolese monastery in the vicinity, when the kind monks placed themselves at the disposal of the pupils to show them the grounds and the famous library of precious manuscripts. The prior, Father Ambrogio Traversari found in Vittorino a spirit kindred to his own. During the scholastic year at Mantua, Father Ambrose often returned the visit, and spent several days at the Casa Giocosa, where the precious treasures of Vittorino's ever growing library were placed at his disposal.

The Camaldolese prior was not the only scholar drawn to Mantua. Guarino sometimes came from Verona to see his son and his old friend, until one day Vittorino urged him to accept the invitation of the Marquis of Ferrara who had asked him to undertake at Ferrara a Court-school modeled on that of Vittorino at Mantua. The two schools worked side by side, on the same lines and with like success. In later years, Guarino's son Battista, who succeeded his father in Ferrara, said of his school, and the same may be said of the Mantuan school: "For as from the Trojan Horse of old the Greek heroes spread over the captured city, so from that famous Academy of my father has proceeded the greater number of those scholars who have carried learning, not merely throughout Italy, but far beyond her borders."

Thus the fame of the happy school at Mantua reached distant lands, "e perfin dalla Grecia cola si recavano," Tiraboschi tells us (32: VI., 72). Not pupils only, but famous scholars also journeyed from afar merely to see and converse with the great master, and thought their efforts well

At the height of his fame as one of the most cultivated scholars of the day, this great humanist had left the world unreluctantly to consecrate himself to the service of God, and then as Superior General of his flourishing Order, had become as renowned for his sanctity and austerity as he had formerly been for his learning.
paid by the visit. There is a story that one day a travel-
trained Carthusian monk arrived at the school, having jour-
neyed on foot all the way from the Netherlands, seeking infor-
mation on some subject in the science of music, for which the
Casa Giocosa enjoyed a great reputation. "Mantua pel sol
Vittorino e per la sola protezione a lui accordata da Gian-
francesco, otteneva allora fama non disuguale a quella delle
universita piu famose (32: VI., 72)."

Garnett's one reference to Vittorino, very
appositely resumes his work: "Vittorino da Feltre showed
practically by his school at Mantua what education ought to
be (12: 111)."
CHAPTER IV.

CHARACTER AND AIMS.

Enough has been said of the work of Vittorino da Feltre to reveal something of his character, for a man shows himself by his deeds. "By their fruits, you shall know them." Nevertheless a closer study of this strong personality will not be without its charms as well as its advantages. It is also revealing to see what his contemporaries and close contemporaries thought and said of him. Furthermore, paradoxical though it may seem, the things that were not said of him tell us a great deal.

In that age of scholarly rivalries and cavils, of petty jealousies and strifes in letters (32: VI., 88), when men shot forth invectives and satires, as destructive in their way as any cannon ball, not a pen or a tongue is ever used against him. It was an age when "the general culture of the time had educated a poisonous brood of impudent wits, of born critics and railers, whose envy called for hecatombs of victims; and to all this was added the envy of the famous men among themselves. In this the philologists notoriously led the way (5: 160)." A disappointed Platina poured forth his biographical caricatures; Lorenzo Valla was ready to criticise everyone and everything (32: VI., 1106) 9: 609); men like Filelfo lavished their satire on all who did not show them admiration (31: 11, 237); Poggio was ready to vilify the name of Guarino or of any one else who dared to aspire to a prominent position as a Greek scholar (32: VI., 1023 and 1023). Ves­ pasiano da Bisticci, the contemporary biographer of the liter­ary men of the early Renaissance, who in his trade as book­seller came in personal contact with them all, tells us that in his invectives Poggio displayed such vehemence that the whole world was afraid of him (4: 422). Symonds well says of Poggio and Filelfo that "the valiant antagonists, like gladi­ators of the Roman arena, plied their diverse weapons, the one discharging darts of verse, the other wielding a heavy club of prose (31: 11, 239). And yet of all these literary duellists not one dared to level his dangerous pen at Vittorino, so great was the esteem in which he was held for his untiring efforts and self­sacrificing methods. He was known far and wide; many loved him; all respected him.

We have already noted what Pope Eugene IV. said of him when presented to him (Chap. 11). On another occasion a certain monk asked permission of this same Pontiff to study under Vittorino, and received the following answer: "Go, my son, willingly do we give you into the charge of the holiest of living men." Father Ambrogio Traversari also held Vittorino in the greatest esteem. Writing back to the monks, on the
occasion of one of his first visits to Mantua, he says: "I have reached Mantua and Vittorino, that best of men and dearest of friends, has given me the kindest welcome." This respect only increased with closer friendship, and when in the panegyric which he asked to preach, at the death of Vittorino, he praised his humble friend in eulogistic terms, he deemed his words insufficient. But popes, cardinals, and monks were not the only ones loud in praising the scholar of Mantua. One of the d'Este declared "that for virtue, learning, and a rare and excellent way of teaching good manners, this master surpassed all others." Vespasiano calls his house "a sanctuary of manners, deeds, and words."

His pupils all considered him a saint, and never lost an occasion of testifying to him their gratitude. When Federigo of Montefeltro became prince of Urbino he had the master's portrait placed in a place of honor in the palace of Montefeltro, and the following inscription written beneath it, "this is placed here by Frederic in honour of Vittorino da Feltre, his saintly master, who by word and example instructed him in all human excellence." Another of his pupils, a native of Mantua, Prendilacqua, could find no better way of showing his admiration for his master than by writing his biography, that he might hand down to posterity the memory of a saint and a scholar. Pisanello has paid his tribute in something more durable than words. The idea of sacrifice seemed to him the dominant note of Vittorino's life, so in making a medal in his honour, he stamped it with the emblem of sacrifice, a pelican feeding her young from her torn breast.

What was it in this man which made all reverence him, and gave him such power over those with whom he lived? He called forth respect, because he had first learnt to respect himself and each of his fellowmen as the images of their Creator; he taught the value and necessity of self-control, because he had first learnt to control and discipline his own nature; he led men onward and upward, because he was deeply convinced of man's high eternal destiny, and was ever ready to give of his own person, to help any one reach that destiny. Courted and admired by the great, conscious of his own influence on his boys, he yet remained always the same, simple and humble, showing that true greatness which does not need bolstering upon the pillows of ostentation and adulation. Devoted to his self-sacrificing and self-imposed labours, he valued the empty vanities of the world at their true worth or worthlessness. A splendid type of the strong Catholic layman, he was deeply religious. In fact in his youth he had aspired to the religious life and thought of retiring to a monastery, but had never felt any definite call to forsake the world. When his acquaintance with the Camaldolese Prior ripened into friendship, in his eagerness to discover God's Will in his
regard, he spoke of his aspirations to Father Traversari, but the latter counseled him to continue his work, as the vocation to which God destined him. Henceforward, therefore, he looked upon his task as a Divine mission, and this was the secret of his constant and unselfish devotedness to it. He drew strength for his wearying labour in his religious exercises to which he was unwaveringly faithful. He heard Mass every morning, received the Sacraments frequently, recited the Divine Office every day, and would never yield to anyone else the privilege of giving the pupils their religious instruction.

His eagerness to serve God, made him eager also to serve his neighbor, especially the poor and suffering. We have seen his preference for poor scholars; indeed the poor whom he educated at his own expense, might be counted by the hundreds. He was untiring also in his devotedness toward the poor of another kind, who are often the most needy; viz., the poor in intellectual gifts; many an hour was spent in helping backward scholars. His life was always a busy one, yet in the midst of so many labours, whether at Padua, at Venice, or at Mantua, he always found time to visit the sick in the hospitals, and to cheer them by his own genial disposition. No alms was ever asked of him in vain, and the Lady Paola said she had but one complaint to make of him, that she had no sooner replenished his wardrobe, than everything not strictly necessary was shared with the poor. Very considerate of others, he was always careful not to hurt anyone by an unkind word. It was this kindly sweetness and moderation, no doubt, which kept him out of quarrels with his learned contemporaries; a single-handed quarrel soon languishes for lack of interest.

And yet, by nature Vittotino was choleric and exceedingly quick to anger. However, he had begun the work of discipline and of self-mastery from his early boyhood and had never relented in the struggle, which continued a life-long one. Conscious of his weakness, he bade some of the older boys interrupt him with a question, when it could be noticed that he was about to lose his temper. However, he knew how to show his just indignation on occasion, and those of his pupils who ever experienced it, never forgot the lesson, for they loved and respected him, as much as they feared his displeasure. On one occasion Carlo Gonzaga had gone on a military expedition with his father, and had not been improved by his life in camp. A day or two after his return, during a game of tennis he made a bad stroke, and followed it with a soldier's oath. In an instant Vittorino was at hand, ran to the boy, seized him by the hair and boxed his ears; at the same time he showed him how his action displeased God, and gave bad example to the younger boys. The culprit, far from resenting the punishment, threw himself on his knees with a promise of amendment, and would not be at ease until he had obtained his master's for-
This was readily granted for Vittorino was far readier to forgive than to blame.

His intellectual gifts were on a par with his moral qualities; they were deep and solid rather than brilliant. Endowed with a splendid mind and a retentive memory, he had had the advantage of studying with the best masters of the day; but of more importance still, he had constantly perfected his faculties by careful and assiduous work. Never satisfied with what he had already acquired, he was always ready to enter new paths of learning. But unlike some of his contemporaries, his quest for knowledge was never feverish or restless, for he was happy with what he possessed. His power of work was tremendous, and the perseverance of his efforts equally remarkable. It was thanks to these qualities, that volume by volume he managed to get together his splendid library, at a time when books were very scarce and yet much in demand, and copying a slow and often a laborious task, for many of the existing MSS. had been but badly preserved, and needed correcting and revising in many cases. With characteristic generosity Vittorino was always glad to share his literary treasures with any friend who desired to borrow a manuscript, but he was also greatly irritated when the volume was not returned.

To great moral and intellectual gifts, he joined other personal qualities which eminently fitted him to be a teacher and leader of men. First of all, his was a winning personality which drew to him, those who came in contact with him; young and old felt the charm of his manner. His lofty ideals, strength of character, and dignified bearing commanded respect; his sincerity, simplicity, and straightforwardness invited confidence and set one at ease; while his happy cheerfulness and the sweet buoyancy of youth which he never lost, endeared him to his pupils. Like every great personality he exercised an indefinable, but very real influence on the people around him. In the class-room the personal influence of the teacher is always considerable, but it was still more so at a time when books were extremely scarce, and all instruction had to be oral, direct from teacher to pupil. But Vittorino's influence was by no means limited to the class-room; it pervaded the whole school. A look, a word, a gesture, his mere presence was enough to maintain discipline, or restore order if it had been disturbed.

His innate power gave him authority; his unselfish devotedness won him love, without which there cannot be true education. His children felt they were loved; they knew they were followed with individual interest; they realized he had their welfare at heart, and so they gave him their confidence and affection in return.
A third and very necessary quality for a
teacher is tact, or practical prudence in dealing with others,
and this also Vittorio possessed. Perhaps on no occasion did
he need it more, or manifest it more markedly, than when he
was called upon to establish peace in the Gonzaga family be-
tween father and son. The Marquis had always shown a prefer-
ence for his second son, Carlo, and this awakened the jealousy
of Louis. Vittorio had often been called upon to make peace,
and had even pointed out to Gian Francesco the injustice of
his partiality. Matters came to an unusual crisis when Louis
one day left home, and went to the camp of his father's rival,
the Duke of Milan. It took all Vittorio's tact and ingenuity
to make the boy return home, and to bring about a reconcilia-

Vittorio was well equipped also for the task
of instruction. He possessed a wide and varied knowledge of
the matter he desired to impart; and his deep understanding
of human nature, and of boys in particular, gave him an in-
sight into individual characters and requirements, and led him
to use the most efficacious means, and to obtain the best re-
ults.

Such a noble nature could only have high
ideals and lofty aims in his work. He knew that many who came
to him to be educated were destined to hold high and important
positions in life, but he never forgot that whatever their
worldly status, all were destined to be citizens not only of
an earthly State, but of an eternal Kingdom. He realized the
meaning of true education, "educere," to bring forth into
actuality the child's latent possibilities. To Vittorio edu-
cation was first of all the "bringing out the details of the
image of God given to us in Baptism, or in other words, of
developing our good qualities."

Character formation was of paramount importance,
and he sought to instil into his pupils habits of virtue. He
taught them "to live the simple life, to tell the truth, and
to remember that true scholarship was inseparable from virtue
and a sense of lofty gratitude toward the Creator (quoted 33:
315)." But he knew that characters are not shaped "en masse;"
each is a separate creation and development. Hence he made his
work a labour of love; and with great vigilance watched over
his pupils. "He studied their character, interests, abilities,
and the career they intended to enter and he shaped each stu-
dent's course of study accordingly (19: 11,47)." "He did not
overlook the individual, but attained his success in overcoming
faults and building up character by private direction and ex-
ertion (20: 178)." He did not want his teaching to be mere
instruction and nothing more, - a short surface veneer. No,
he desired his pupils to think for themselves, and to avoid the
He was not content with training the mind, all-important as he knew that work to be, but his aim was to develop the whole man, and he wanted the work to be a complete and harmonious whole. He was perhaps one of the first modern educators to emphasize the importance of physical training, though he was equally careful not to over-emphasize it. At the school of Mantua "for the first time gymnastics and all noble bodily exercises were treated along with scientific instruction as indispensable to a liberal education (5: 214)," but they were always a subordinate means, never an end in themselves. He aimed at sending forth into the world men with strength, hardiness and power of endurance, no less than with polish and grace of manner, and not mere athletes. Vittorino knew how to draw profit from everything and the play-ground was a splendid class-room for lessons in politeness, self-control, and unselfishness.

Severe if he thought it necessary, his method was generally to proceed by way of encouragement, praise, and interest rather than by that of punishment; but if the latter was a necessity, the Master usually allowed some time to elapse after the offense, before inflicting the penalty. He did not use corporal punishment, and we are told that the hardest penance he imposed was to make the boy kneel and lie upon the ground in the presence of his fellow-pupils (5: 215). In general the master's displeasure was punishment enough. To inspire a love for study, he tried to make it as attractive as possible, and insisted on having the school surroundings pleasant and attractive. To make study profitable, he considered the individual need, and adapted the work accordingly.

His government was carried on with so much order and method, such quiet vigilance and patient ingenuity, that his pupils never felt the weight of the strong hand upon them, except to shield them from harm, or help them in difficulties. He launched out into the world such distinguished men that it is not to be wondered at that he exerted a powerful influence on the Italian schools of his own day and on those of the next generation (19: 11,49).

Yet his principles were not new; for just as human nature does not change, neither do the right principles
Concerning the education of that human nature change in their
essence. Conditions, environment, customs, requirements, --
all these change, and change radically at times, so that the
accidental conditions of education must at times, be altered
materially to adapt them to the needs of the moment. The work-
ing principles of Vittorino da Feltre were but the practical
application of the theories of education expounded two cen-
turies earlier by St. Thomas in his "Questiones Disputatae," and
particularly under the subject "De Registro." These ped-
agogical principles are clearly stated for us by Dr. Pace in
his article on "St. Thomas' Theory of Education (37: 290-303),
a few points of which it may be interesting to note, as they
show us Vittorino's theory of practical pedagogy.

"Education properly so-called (disciplina)
must, in order to produce the best results, derive its methods
from that which the mind instinctively follows in acquiring
knowledge by its unaided efforts. The teacher has to lead his
pupil not along an arbitrarily chosen path, but along that
which is marked out by nature. The perfection of his art lies
in the avoidance of the artificial.... What he (St. Thomas)
insists on is: due regard for the fact that the mind is self-
active..... The teacher, therefore, accomplishes his task ad-
juvando et ministrando..... He supplies the mind the assist-
ance it needs and the means it requires for its orderly and
healthy action..... The advance from general ideas and prin-
ciples to particular applications and conclusions, is the nat-
ural course of development; and in conformity with this the
scope and method of education must be determined. Now the
teacher finds in his own thinking just this discursive process.
To communicate it by word or other appropriate symbol so as to
lead the pupil through the same stages of reasoning, is the
essential part of the teacher's work..... Much, then, of the
teacher's success depends upon his skill in exhibiting the
linkage of thought with thought so that even less capable minds
may be trained in orderly deduction..... The instructor's own
processes of reasoning should be so conducted as to serve as
an object lesson for the student..... If the aim of education
is to quicken self-activity, a most important means to this
end is that feature of method which accustoms the learner to
look beyond each item of knowledge as it comes to him and note,
according to some principle of order, its manifold relations."

Dr. Pace thus resumes the Thomist philosophy
of pedagogy. "In the first place, knowledge is essentially
a product of the mind, and learning is a growth in self-
activity. Education, consequently, is no mere imparting or
infusion; it is rather a solicitation, suggestion and direction,
by which the mind is prompted to exert its natural power in
normal ways..... Secondly, while the chief stress is laid upon
the development of intellectual function, due notice is taken
of the subordinate faculties. Sense, imagination, and memory cooperate both in the first acquisition of knowledge and in its retention. And generally speaking he says that vigor of mind corresponds to soundness of body, so that the healthy organism ensures superior intellectual attainment.

42

If we have quoted at length it is because we cannot ignore the fact that Vittorino da Feltre had been trained in the philosophy of the Schoolmen. True, scholasticism was then on the decline, because it was often an unwieldy instrument in the hands of shallow minds who dwarf into insignificance by comparison with the giant intellects who preceded them in the thirteenth century Schools. But in all ages deep thinkers have drawn from Scholasticism its right principles, which they have transplanted into action, and of these thinkers as well as doers was Vittorino. St. Thomas was not his only guide, for while the Angelic Doctor chiefly concerned himself with the intellectual aspect of the educative process; others were interested rather in its moral aspect. Among the latter class we may mention John Gerson who for a long time was Chancellor of the University of Paris, and whose experience gives his educational treatises particular value and interest (19: 1,172). There were a number of educational tracts written in the later Mediaeval period, and practically all were composed by the theologians.

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We have seen how a great change occurred in the educational system of Italy in the fifteenth century, when the direction of the training of the princely families, and of higher education in general was placed in the hands of a few distinguished humanists (5: 216). From their pen now came the treatises which reveal the methods and principles of the new learning, and fortunately most of these early humanists were still untouched by the contamination of the pagan movement, which they already foresaw however, and which they strove to forestall and check. Vittorino would have been well qualified by his position, experience, and ability to bequeath to posterity an account of the methods of the new teaching, but he chose not to do so. He preferred to implant them in the minds and hearts of his pupils. His great service in the field of education was "to adjust the new humanistic studies to a system of teaching, and to show how they could be taught without compromising the principles of Christianity." (20: 179) He grasped the full meaning of the aim of education, of its content and methods; so much so, indeed, that in his practices
Vittorino was not unique in his methods and ideals, though he carried them into practice more perfectly perhaps than any of his contemporaries. There were many of those earlier Humanists of the purer Renaissance, who were very much concerned in the pedagogical questions of the new system, and desirous of aiding in the solutions of the rising problems. The treatises which they wrote in exposition of the principles of action of the new system, give us a very correct estimate of the theories which Vittorino put into practice. In general these treatises were addressed, formally to individual princes, but they were intended ultimately for public circulation. Of such was the "De ingenuis moribus (36:102)" addressed by Pier Paolo Vergerio to Ubertinus of Carrara, son of the lord of Padua, and the "De studiis et litteris (36:119)" of Leonardo Bruni d'Arezzo addressed to the princess Battista di Montefeltro, one of the most gifted of the Renaissance women (7: Chap. 1). Both of these works were published in the first decade of the fifteenth century, and others were not slow to follow. Later the German princes were also exhorted to cultivate and encourage humanistic studies (5:216), and Aeneas Sylvius (later Pope Pius II., then attached to the court of the Emperor Frederick III. at Vienna) addressed exhortations on the subject to the young Hapsburg princes, Arch-duke Sigismund and King Ladislaus of Bohemia and Hungary, as the last named prince had consulted him in the matter of education.

In his exhortation, "De liberorum educatione" we find some interesting details which throw light on the plan of education of the humanistic teachers. As regards a boy's physical training, we must bear in mind that we aim at implanting habits which will prove beneficial during life. Too much importance can hardly be attached to right bearing and gesture. Every youth destined to exalted position should further be trained in military exercises. Games, too, should be encouraged for young children. Such relaxations should form an integral part of each day's occupation, if learning is not to be an object of disgust. There is no reason why social feastings should not be dignified by serious conversation and yet be bright and gay withal. But the body, after all, is but the framework for the activities of the mind, he that pampers the body is devising a prison for himself. Birth, wealth, fame, health, vigor, and beauty are one and all of the nature of accidents; they come and they go. But the riches of the mind are a stable possession, unassailed by fortune, calumny, or time. Lay to heart the truth here conveyed; our one sure possession is character. Need I impress upon you the importance of the study of philos-
phy, and of letters? ..... By this two-fold wisdom ..... we are, one and all, enlightened to see the realities of the world around us. Literature is our guide to the true meaning of the past, to a right estimate of the present, to a sound forecast of the future. ..... In the matter of nurses the greatest care is necessary, so subtle are the influences which affect the growing mind. But above all other safeguards stands the unconscious guidance of the mother. In religion, I may assume ..... that you have learnt prayers; ..... that you have been taught in what consist the chief Commandments of God ..... the way of salvation and the doctrine of the life of the world to come ..... Nor can any earthly interest have so urgent a claim upon us. We shall not value this human existence which has been bestowed upon us except in so far as it prepares us for the future state ..... In the choice of companions be careful to seek the society of those only whose example is worthy of your imitation ..... We must learn to express ourselves with distinction, with style and manner worthy of our subject ..... But speech should ever follow upon reflection (35: 60 et sq.)."

The counsels which Aeneas Sylvius here recommends, Vittorino da Feltre strove to inculcate upon his pupils, labouring day after day unremittingly and untiringly to plant the good seed of right principles and real culture, to cultivate it, and direct its early growth, to make of it, not a hot-house flower, but a beautiful plant of sturdy qualities, which would be proof against the winds and rains of life. Like every thinking mind of his day, he realized that while the revival of the study of the classics opened a rich field of culture, it was a field full of the quagmires and the pools of pagan thought, manners, and ideals into which the unwise or the unrestrained would easily lose themselves, and this was the danger against which he sought to defend the rising generation.

With a strong, enlightened Catholic spirit, he laboured to establish the new studies on a Christian basis, therefore he wanted to retain all that was essential and useful in the old system of education, as a foundation. It was only the superstructure which needed readjustment, and this was to be lifted, enlarged, beautified, and filled with treasures. But this work of "adapting the study of the classics to the needs of the Christian youth's mental and moral development and at the same time guard against its abuse (7: 27)," was no easy task, and called for a life of self-sacrificing devotement, if it was to be carried out in practice. Like all the best Italian humanist teachers Vittorino's great aim was to give his pupils an all-round culture which would prepare them to take an active, intelligent, and serviceable part in the affairs of the times both public and private, and thus
in the happy performance of duty, prepare for the life to come.
His great principle was that true education is that which pre-
paries for life in this world and for life in the next, and in
view of this principle, all branches were to be evaluated, and
each to take its appropriate and proportioned position. Study,
according to d'Arezzo, must conduce to the "profitable enjoy-
ment" of life, but an enjoyment worthy of man's "lofty nature,"
through the beautiful to the good and the true (36: 44-49).

Vittorino's plan of studies was very closely
parallel to that which Vergerio traces for us in his treatise.
Both scholars had studied together at the school of Barzizza
at the University of Padua, and a strong friendship had arisen
between them based on similarity of views and tastes. The
one expressed in words what the other expressed in works, so
that in reading the theories of the one we are but reviewing
the methods of the other. Vergerio tells us what they under-
stood by a liberal education when he defines the position of
the humanists. "We call those studies liberal" he says "which
are worthy of a free man, those studies by which we attain and
practice virtue and wisdom; that education which calls forth,
trains and develops those highest gifts of body and of mind
which ennoble men and which are rightly judged to rank next in
dignity to virtue only. For to a vulgar temper gain and pleas­
ure are the one aim of existence, to a lofty nature moral worth
and fame. It is, then of the highest importance that even from
infancy this aim, this effort, should constantly be kept alive
in growing minds (36: 102)."

In the humanistic training, then, such as it
is explained for us by Vergerio, virtue is the cornerstone,
and the formation of character an aim which must never be lost
sight of. Religion must be queen of the school, and all human­
istic studies must be subservient to her, paying her a homage
which only ennobles, beautifies, and enriches them. Letters,
or literature are the basis of learning, because they are the
accumulation of the noble expression of all the noble thoughts
of great men in past ages. They include the three essentials,
history, moral philosophy, and eloquence, - the studies which
together help to form an upright character, a sound judgment,
and a cultured style. But if this end is to be obtained the
teacher must select carefully and wisely from the ancient au-
thors, and make prudent expurgations, so that the pupil may be
given only "worthy thoughts worthily expressed (36: 57)." His­
tory holds the first place because of its attractiveness and
its usefulness since the story of the past teaches many lessons
for the present and the future, and enlarges one's views.
Moral philosophy teaches truth, which is the secret of true
freedom, and when studied in connection with history it teach­
es how to read and interpret history aright. It is helped by
logic, the science and art of reasoning, that sure judge in
detecting the truth or fallacy of arguments. Eloquence gives a refined expression to the truth learned in philosophy; and a judicious choice of poetry is a splendid aid to the formation of a good style both in speech and in writing. A study of nature also reveals a vast amount of valuable information, and has also a refining influence.

But before the student can be ready to take up the study of history, philosophy, and eloquence profitably he must have a good elementary foundation, which must be laid in the sound and thorough knowledge of Latin. And so Vergerio warns against a neglect of the old subjects, grammar, rhetoric, logic, and composition. Penmanship has its place; reading aloud from choice authors both in poetry and prose is much recommended, practice in oral and written composition is invaluable; but the first requisite in the art of composition is having thoughts; Vergerio has no use for the student who has only words at his command. As for the auxiliary studies, Vergerio warns against over-crowding the curriculum with purely objective studies to the detriment of the "humanities," but we must not infer from this that other studies were discountenanced. On the contrary mathematics, science, art, and music, all had their proper and important places.

The correlation of studies is very important, and the selection depends on the needs and tastes of the individual, for the humanistic teaching was decidedly individualistic. To quote Vergerio again, "Perhaps we do wisely to pursue that study which we find most suitable to our intelligence and our tastes, though it is true that we cannot rightly understand one subject unless we can perceive its relation to the rest. The choice of study will depend to some extent upon the character of individual minds. For whilst one boy seizes rapidly the point of which he is in search and states it ably, another, working far more slowly has yet sounder judgment and so detects the weak spot in his rival's conclusions. The former, perhaps, will succeed in poetry, or in the abstract sciences; the latter in real studies and practical pursuits." Vergerio also goes into interesting details which we see put into practice by Vittorino, for the latter studied each individual child, worked for the correction of faults, and the perfecting of native talent, awakened interest, gave incentives to study by rewards, emulation, and encouragement, obtained his pupils' confidence, invited questioning, and took every means to stimulate personal effort.

But Latin was not the only entrance into the realm of classical traditions, and if history, philosophy, and eloquence were the objects of the student's quest, he would find perhaps still richer treasures if he travelled along another and older road, the Greek. When Vergerio wrote his
Treatise, before the close of the fourteenth century (though it was only published in 1405), Greek had not yet come into its own, and its teaching was confined, for the most part, to Universities; but already Chrysoloras was lecturing in Florence and he was soon to be joined by others from the East, while scholars from the West, like Guarino, Filelfo, and Aurispa were journeying to Greece. But when Vittorino took charge of the Mantuan school in 1423 the Greek Revival had already reached large proportions, and he himself did as much as any other to advance it. He was a distinguished Greek scholar, though he did not consider himself proficient enough to teach it, but sought to procure capable native Greek scholars since, as we have seen, it was one of his principles that only a native can teach a language thoroughly. So great was the attention paid to Greek in the Casa Giocosa that the children were taught from their earliest years to speak both Latin and Greek fluently, and their progress in both languages was so remarkable that it called forth the admiration of eminent scholars like Father Ambrogio Traversari.

Little Cecilia Gonzaga, the real triumph of Vittorino's methods and care, progressed so rapidly that already at the age of six, her tutor ordered a copy of the Gospels in Greek, that she might use it the following year (36: 70). Of his first visit to the Casa Giocosa, Father Traversari wrote: "Among the pupils are several so advanced in Greek, that they translate it into Latin as an exercise. He (Vittorino) teaches Greek to the sons and daughters of the prince, and they all write in that language." A few years later, speaking of Cecilia, Father Ambrose wrote: "There is also a daughter of the Marquis at the academy who, though only ten years old, writes Greek so well, that I am ashamed to say many of my own scholars, cannot show anything to equal it (quoted, 9:603)." Indeed, Woodward tells us that it would seem that nowhere else in Italy was Greek so thoroughly and successfully taught as at the school at Mantua (36: 54).
PUPILS OF VITTORINO DA FELTRE.

There is no better commentary on the success of Vittorino's work than the splendid results he achieved. From the Casa Giocosa came forth prelates, princes, soldiers and scholars who were an honour alike to their Church and to their country. The master's influence over each member of the Gonzaga family was remarkable. Even the Marquis himself soon came to look upon Vittorino as his wisest and best adviser, and consulted him on all important matters. As for the Lady Paola, she always revered him as a saint, and placed herself under his unsuspecting tutelage, not for lessons in Latin and Greek precisely, though these were not wanting, but for lessons in self-sacrifice, devotedness, charity, and piety. So rapid was her progress in piety that her former life of idleness and luxury soon yielded to one of mortification, mercy, and kindness; after her husband's death she entered the Convent of the Poor Clares at Mantua, whither her daughter had preceded her.

We have seen how spoilt and pampered the two Gonzaga boys were when they were given over to the care of Vittorino. In fact, Louis might almost have been considered a hopeless case, and yet he was to leave his name on the pages of political history as one of the best rulers of his native city and as a patron of art and learning. His future wife, Barbara von Brandenburg shared the education of his little sister Cecilia, and from this union of two of Vittorino's pupils, Louis Gonzaga and Barbara, in direct line, in the fourth generation was to be born the great Saint Aloysius of the Company of Jesus. The other sons also of the Gonzaga family always did honour to the education they had received,—whether as soldier, scholar, courtier, or gentleman. In Carlo the soldier predominated, in Gian Lucido the scholar. Already at the age of fourteen the latter had attracted attention by the admirable Latin verses he had written to celebrate the visit of the Emperor Sigismund on his return from the coronation ceremony in Rome, at the time when the Emperor raised the Lord of Mantua to the position of Marquis of the Empire. The lad's reward was a visit to the Canaldolese monastery, and Father Ambrose writes thus of the visit: "Vittorino brought to see me yesterday the young son of the Marquis of Mantua, Gian Lucido, aged about fourteen. In my presence he recited two hundred lines of Latin verse composed by himself. It described the celebration for the reception given to the Emperor Sigismund in the city of Mantua. The accuracy of the language, and the elegance of delivery, added much to the beauty of the little poem. The dear boy then showed me two propositions which he had added to the geometry of Euclid." The youngest son, Alexander, was prevented by ill-health from entering any
public career. Margherita became one of the most accomplished ladies in Italy, and when she married Lionello d’Este, the pupil of Guarino, their court at Ferrara became one of the most polished and renowned in Italy (32: VI., 37).

Of all Vittorino’s pupils the most beautiful character was the youngest daughter of the Marquis, Cecilia (26: 183) (4: 493), the little prodigy who called forth the admiration of Father Traversari for her remarkable learning. Vittorino took the greatest care with her education, seeking to develop every faculty, and to give her every accomplishment suited to her exalted position. She responded perfectly to his training, and made such progress that at the age of sixteen the fame of her remarkable beauty and extraordinary talents spread throughout Italy. But she had no thought of worldly glory and only longed for the blessed day when she might renounce all that this world offers, to embrace the cloistered life of the P. or Clares. Her father violently opposed her project, and it was two years before she could carry out her desire; but at last she was able to dedicate herself to the service of God, to the great joy of her mother and of her tutor.

Thus did Vittorino plant the seeds of virtue and of learning in the princely House of Gonzaga, and this tradition of culture was continued long after his death, so that we are not surprised to hear that "the house of Gonzaga at Mantua and that of Montefeltro of Urbino were among the best ordered and richest in men of ability during the second half of the fifteenth century (5: 43)." One of the most renowned of Vittorino’s pupils was Frederick of Montefeltro (5: 44-46 and 190-192) (32: VI., 77-80), in whom the master awakened an ardent love of letters and of good manners. In his youth he had been taken prisoner by the Venetians, and to escape the plague he had been sent to Mantua, and so completed his education at the Casa Giocosa (32: VI., 78). This happy misfortune was to be his greatest good fortune, for he was to carry away a rich store of culture and learning, which he was to put to good use in the splendid administration of his little territory.

Wise, just, and kind toward his subjects; brave in warfare though loving peace, he held a court as brilliant as any in Italy, and thither he attracted artists, poets, and scholars, while young nobles came "to learn manners." Burckhardt tells us that "not only the state, but the court too, was a work of art and organization, and this in every sense of the word. Federigo had 500 persons in his service; the arrangements of the court were as complete as in the capitals of the greatest monarchs; but nothing was wasted; all had its object, and all was carefully watched and controlled. The court was no scene of vice and dissipation; it served as a school of military education for the sons of other great houses,
The thoroughness of whose culture and instruction was made a point of honour by the Duke (5: 45).

Federigo's greatest achievement perhaps was the collection of his magnificent library, a part of which is now in the Vatican. If we are to credit Vespasiano (4: 11, 94-99) (35: 76-82), who, as librarian for Federigo, rendered him great assistance in procuring manuscripts and copyists, no other existing library could rival that of Urbino in richness and completeness. Here were to be found all the writings of the Latin and Greek Fathers, the works of the Middle Ages especially in theology, all the fourteenth and fifteenth century "moderns," a great variety of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew writings, — the very list astounds us. Now Federigo always testified that it was Vittorino who had instructed him in all that was great.

Another prince educated in the Joyous House was Manfred, Lord of Imola, one of the most notable petty rulers of Italy in the fifteenth century. Like so many of his fellow-students at Mantua, in later life he was exemplary as soldier, statesman, and scholar.

Not only secular rulers did Vittorino train, but many also who were one day to hold important ecclesiastic-al positions. One of these, John Andrea de' Bussi was six years in the service of Cardinal Cusa, when he was made Bishop of Aleria in Corsica, while still, however, residing at Rome. Paul II. had such esteem for his learning that he made him superintendent of the first printing-press to be set up in Rome. He had charge of the regulation and correction of all editions, and later Sixtus IV. added to this employment, that of being Papal librarian (32: VI., 240-242).

Francesco da Castiglione "degno scolare di Vittorino da Feltre (32: VI., 465)" became a renowned Florentine theologian holding a position of honour in his city's University, and was also a canon of St. Lawrence. He compiled a book of the Lives of the Saints, and many of the lives he wrote himself, as for instance that of St. Antonino Archbishop of Florence, with whom he had lived for more than eight years.

The literary zeal of princes was imitated by private citizens also. One of the most zealous of these, the wealthy Venetian Francesco Barbaro had been a pupil of Vittorino, and proved himself worthy of such a master. Engaged in private business, constantly sent on important embassies for his city, he yet found time to write many volumes, to correspond with the great men of his day, to protect and assist men of learning, and to labour for the discovery of ancient manuscripts.
Others of Vittorino's pupils were to make their mark very especially in the field of letters. Prendilacqua, (32: VI., 71), a native of Mantua, who knew Vittorino well, became his first biographer and has left us an interesting account in the work entitled "Intorno alla Vita di Vittorino de' Feltrè," a book which Symonds calls "a masterpiece of natural delineation (31: 11, 37)." Gregorio Corrara wrote a treatise in elegant classic Latin, entitled "De Contemptu Mundi," and dedicated it to Cecilia Gonzaga, urging her to persevere in her holy vocation. The polished Castiglione whose "Cortigiano" was soon read in all the courts of Europe, was not a direct pupil of Vittorino, as he belonged to the next generation, but it was at Mantua, and later at the court of Frederick of Urbino, that he was educated, and there he imbibed those principles of gentlemanly courtesy and culture which he was so perfectly to describe. He had "received an education framed upon the system set in vogue by Vittorino and Guarino (31: 11, 419)." The court of Frederick of Urbino, and the personality and writings of Castiglione reveal to us how great was the influence of Vittorino in shaping those cultured "courts of good manners" so characteristic of the Italy of the fifteenth century, and to be found nowhere else (5: 368 et sq).

Still another sphere of influence was opened to the pupils of Vittorino, when they in turn became teachers, and scattered the good seed in various parts of their own country and even in far-away lands. Thus Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan procured Baldo Martorelli as tutor for his daughter Ippolita and her relative, Battista, and under his guidance the young girls made such extraordinary progress in Latin and Greek, that their addresses called forth the admiration of the learned and gifted Pius II. Battista became the Duchess of Urbino, wife of the great Federigo, and Ippolita became the wife of Alfonso II., King of Naples, another connoisseur and patron of learning. Martorelli became Battista's secretary at Naples, and it is very probable that he was tutor to her daughter Isabella of Aragon (7: 9 et 30).

But the winds of fortune were to carry the seed of Vittorino's teaching into more distant lands still. When in the early fifteenth century, Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, son of Henry IV. of England, surrounded himself with a select circle of friends, and became the first English example of the princely patron and lover of learning (10: 3-4), he desired to draw scholars to his court, and he naturally turned to Italy to look for them. He began corresponding with learned Italians, then he helped and protected those who needed help, and gradually he enticed some of the younger humanists to introduce the new studies into England. One of these was Antonio Beccaria of Verona, who had been a pupil of Vittorino da Feltrè, and then became secretary and translator for the
When English scholars journeyed to Ferrara and of Vittorino at Mantua, they were drawn thither by the fame of its learning, many visited schools of Guarino and back their methods. Thus in all probability as Langton, Bishop of Winchester had Vittorino as a model, he founded a school for boys in his own home at Winchester there furthered the new learning (10: 53).

The influence of Vittorino spread more and more, first directly, then indirectly, until it had permeated distant parts of Europe. He educated and prepared for men and women who would be leaders in whatever position called them, men and women strong enough to oppose an efficacious resistance to the flood of paganism which was soon to pour over the learned world, seeking to sweep away the principles of faith and authority so strong in the Middle Ages, and finally spending its last strength in the terrible Protestant Revolt. Vittorino had done his work so well that not one of those he trained was caught up by the Radicalism of the later Renaissance, -- Lorenzo Valla might be the only exception, but he came to the Casa Gicosa only when his character was already spoilt. Vittorino strove always to prepare souls for life here, and for the life to come, and so successful did he prove that he has been the inspirer of true educators in all ages since his time. The matter of instruction may change with the years, but what of that? "Up to a certain point, .... the value of education is independent either of the intrinsic value or of the practical usefulness of what is taught." (25: 5) But the principles of education do not change, and true education will ever be that which develops every faculty of man, each according to its proper function, and its relative importance, the lower ever subject to that which is higher, so that all may be directed to their proper end, and help man reach his high eternal destiny.

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   Two Medieval Catholic Educators
It is the practice of the Graduate School to have theses read by three referees. If the first two votes are favorable, the third reading is sometimes omitted. The Graduate Council regularly recommends for the degree all students who have a majority of favorable votes.

Students are frequently required to rewrite portions of their theses because of the referees' criticisms. This will explain why references to pages are sometimes inaccurate and why shortcomings concerning which comment is made in the reports are found not to exist.
In my opinion this work measures up to the standard of a Master's thesis. The first chapter in particular is excellent, dealing with the historical setting of Europe during the later Middle Ages. The remaining chapters, while well executed, lack the critical spirit characteristic of the first chapter. In these there is more emphasis put on biography rather than the spirit and influence of da Feltre, though these are not altogether wanting.

The list of books consulted is really remarkable, and though some must have afforded but meager fruit for the labor expended in finding them and searching through their contents; still to have consulted them at all speaks favorably for the thoroughness of the paper.

Joseph Roubik, S.J.
The thesis is primarily a biography of an educator of the 15th century. It tends to reveal certain of the educational ideals and methods of the period, and, in particular, of the educator in question.

The candidate seems to have studied her references with care and to have digested and mastered the subject matter under consideration.

Acceptable.

Wm. H. Johnson