

THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

In messing around the Library in search of material for an essay, the writer came upon an account of an ancient University and on reading farther into the past, he realized that it is but too true that the good old times have gone.

It is an account of the University of Bologna, an institution that flourished in the twelfth century, and, for all the writer knows, may be flourishing yet. The University was one of students and they seem to have had things pretty much their own way.

The principal student officer was the Rector, elected for a term of two years and who was required to be a "secular clerk unmarried, wearing the clerical habit" as the statutes put it, with five years' standing in the study of law and at least twenty-four years of age.

The only salary attached to the office was a portion of the fines exacted by its occupant, but nevertheless the Rector was bound to keep a certain amount of state—for instance the Statute provides that the Rector must keep at least two liveried servants. On the day of his inauguration also, when in the presence of the assembled University, the Rector was solemnly invested with the Rectorial hood, he was then escorted in triumph to his house by the whole body of students, where a banquet, or at least wine and spices, was awaiting them. In the 16th century, the custom came in of setting upon the newly-elected Rector, tearing the clothes off his back, and then requiring him to redeem the fragments at an exorbitant rate. A statute was passed in 1562 to restrain the "too horrid and petulant mirth" of these occasions, but it did not attempt to abolish this pleasant custom.

For these and similar extortions the office became so unwelcome, that it was made compulsory upon the wealthier students, and elaborate precautions were taken to prevent those who had it thrust upon them from absconding before their term was up. The Rector, therefore, was not allowed to leave the city without the permission of his council, or without giving sufficient security for his return.

Of the other officers in the University, the Peciarii, the Taxors and the Bedels, are the most interesting. The first of these, the Peciarii—were six in number and their duty was to supervise the keepers of the book-stalls. The Stationer was compelled periodically to submit his MSS. to this board and was fined 5 Bologna solidi for every incorrect copy he produced. Students who might detect clerical errors in their books were bound on pain of perjury to give information against the stationer: and both Doctors and students were bound at all times to lend their books to the Peciarii for the purpose of comparison.