

University Ideals of Alfonso X.

Alfonso X., surnamed "The Wise," who was king of Castile and Leon from 1252 to 1284 is the Spanish Justinian. His codification of the laws of his dual kingdom is known as the *Libro de las Leyes*, (Book of the Laws) or *Las Siete Partidas* (the Seven Parts) and is considered for its time, a remarkably exhaustive and advanced work on jurisprudence. I have translated a couple of excerpts from the part dealing with the laws governing the establishment and administration of universities, which may have some interest for Varsity readers as a glimpse of academic life some six hundred and odd years ago. It will be seen that in some respects the Alfonsine ideal of student peacefulness has not yet descended upon the earth.

Chapter XXXI. of Universities.

Law II. In what place the university shall be established, and how the teachers shall be immune from injury.

The town in which it shall be desired to establish the university must be one having pure air and beautiful surroundings, in order that the teachers who teach the sciences and the students who learn them may live in health in it and that they may rest and enjoy themselves in the evening, when they rise weary from their study. Also there must be plenty of bread and wine and good inns in which they may dwell and spend their time without great expense. Also we say that the citizens of that place where the university shall be established must to the best of their ability protect and honor the teachers and students and all things pertaining to them. And none must seize as security the messengers who come to them from their native villages nor sequester them for any debt that their parents might owe. . . . And we also say that none, from any enmity or ill-will he may feel against the students or their parents, must do them dishonor or wrong or violence. And therefore we decree that the teachers and students and their messengers and all things pertaining to them shall be safe and immune from injury, both when they are coming to the university, when they are in it, and when they are going home. And this guarantee we grant them throughout all the places in our dominions. And whosoever does contrary to this, seizing one of them by violence, or robbing him of his property, shall pay it back to him fourfold, and if he should wound, or dishonor, or kill him, he shall be severely punished as a man who violates our guarantee.

Law VI. How the teachers and students may form societies and fraternities among themselves and chose one to advise them.

The wise men of antiquity forbade societies and

fraternities of many men to be formed in towns and in kingdoms, because therefrom arises more evil than good. But we think it right that teachers and students should be permitted to do so in universities, because they combine for the purpose of doing good, and they are all strangers and come from far separate parts. Wherefore it is fitting that they should all lawfully form a society whenever it might be necessary for the furtherance of their studies and for protection of themselves and their things. Also they may elect of themselves a head, who in Latin is called Rector of the university, whom they shall obey in all proper and right matters. And the rector must advise and compel the students not to get into faction-fights and riots with the men of the town where the students live, nor among themselves; and to refrain in all things from doing dishonor or wrong to anyone. And the rector must forbid them to go about at night, rather he should command them to remain quietly in their dwellings, and apply themselves to studying and to learning and to leading an honest and good life. For to this end were universities established, and not for people to prowl about armed either by night or by day, seeking an opportunity to fight and to commit other folly and wickedness to their own detriment and to the disturbance of the towns where they live. And if they should act contrary to this, then our judge must punish and correct them so that they may abandon their evil ways and do right.

A.F.B.C.



Exchanges

Queen's University Journal, in an issue just to hand, urges the need for post-graduate courses in divinity and suggests that the Ph. D. course be made to cover theology as well as science and arts. The reason put forth is that younger men should be offered inducements to remain with the university until they acquire a thorough education.

On the suggestion of the Principal of Queen's, it has been decided to establish an employment bureau in connection with the registrar's office for the students of the university.

The New York Tribune has offered a prize of \$25 for the best essay, not exceeding eight hundred words in length, setting forth the benefits which result to colleges and to the student body from college fraternities. Another prize of \$25 will be given for the best similar essay in disparagement of college fraternities.

In the February number of "Acta Victoriana" appears a contribution by Principal Hutton, entitled "Some Oxford Types." An excellent photograph of the writer accompanies the article.