

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

I.—BERNARDINO OCHINO.

A CAPUCHIN PREACHER AT THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION.

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BERNARDINO OCHINO is one of the most striking and picturesque characters among the Italian Protestants of the Reformation period. He was an oratorical genius and monkish saint, who shone with meteoric brilliancy on the sky of Italy, but disappeared under a cloud of scepticism in the far North. He reminds one of three other eloquent monks—Savonarola, who was burned at the stake in Florence; Father Gavazzi, who became a Calvinist, and died peacefully in Rome; and Père Hyacinthe, who left the Carmelite order and the pulpit of Nôtre Dame in Paris without joining any Protestant church.

Ochino was born in the fair Tuscan city of Siena, which is adorned by a Gothic marble dome, and gave birth to six popes, fifty cardinals, and a number of canonized saints—among them the famous Caterina of Siena; but also to Protestant heretics, like Lælius and Faustus Socinus. He joined the Franciscans, and afterward the severe order of the Capuchins, which had been recently founded by Fra Matteo Bassi in 1525. He hoped to gain heaven by self-denial and good works. He far surpassed his brethren in ability and learning, although his education was defective—he did not know the original languages of the Bible. He was twice elected vicar-general of the order. He was revered by many as a saint for his severe asceticism and mortification of the flesh. Vittoria Colonna, the most gifted and cultivated woman of her age, and her friend, the Duchess Renata of Ferrara were among his ardent admirers. Pope Paul III. intended to make him a cardinal.

He was the most popular preacher in Italy in his time. No such orator had appeared since the death of Savonarola in 1498. He was in general demand for the course of Lenten sermons; and everywhere—in Siena, Naples, Rome, Florence, Venice—he attracted crowds of people, who listened to him as a prophet sent of God.