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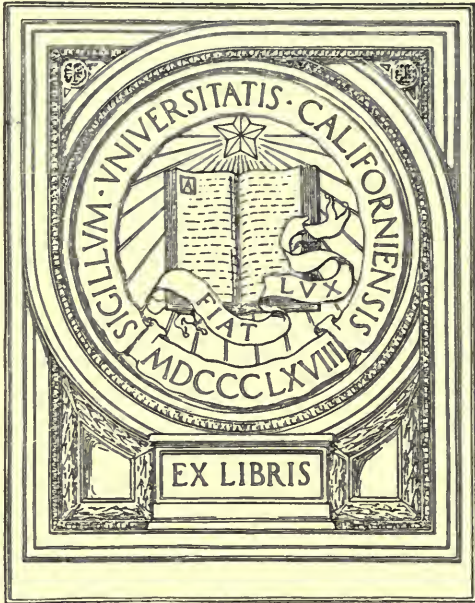
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University of Louvain
and its Library

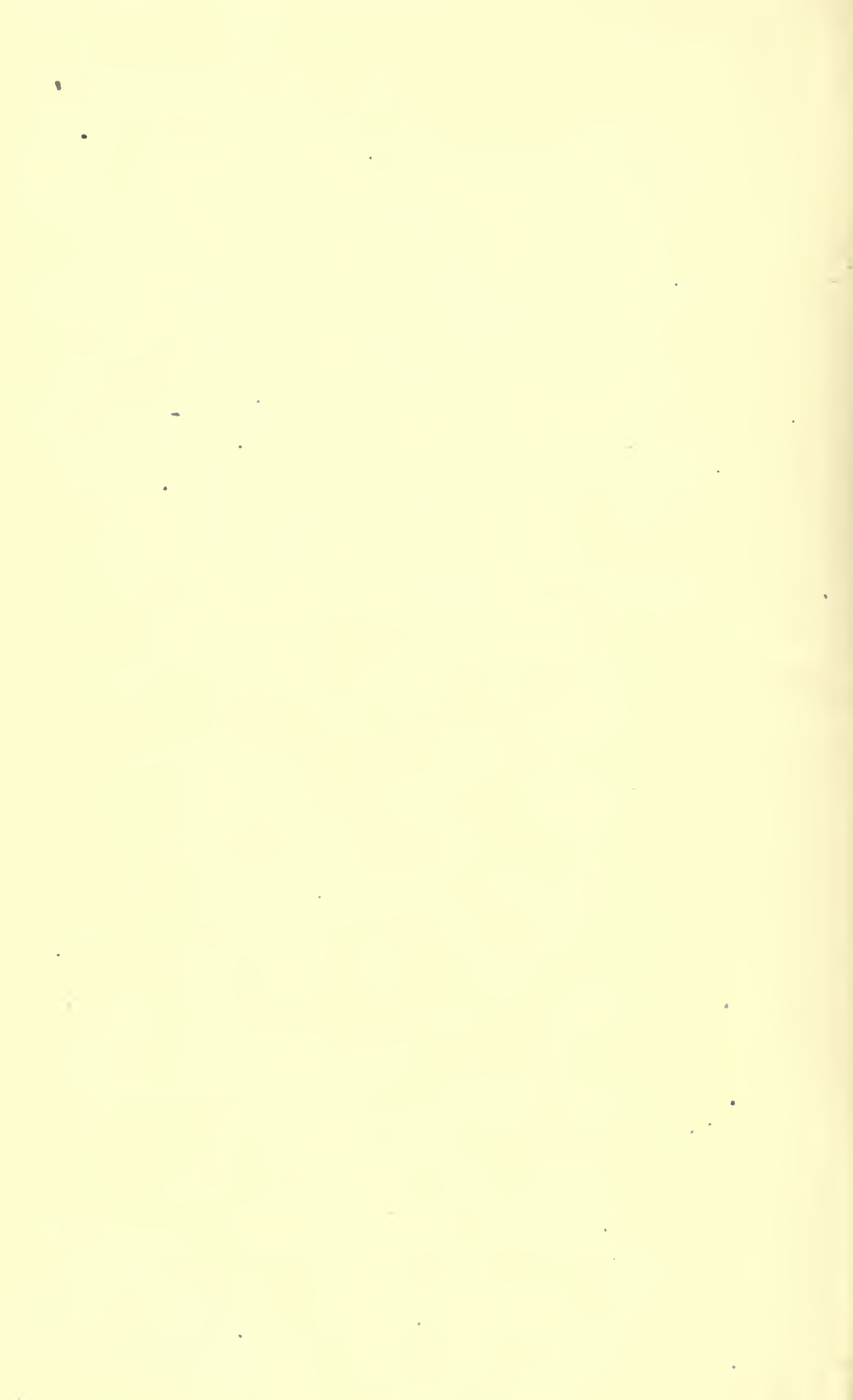
By
Theodore Wesley Koch

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



EX LIBRIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN
AND ITS LIBRARY





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Architectural Review

THE RUE DE NAMUR
WITH THE UNIVERSITY ON THE RIGHT

Frontispiece

THE
UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN
AND ITS LIBRARY

BY
THEODORE WESLEY KOCH
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



LONDON AND TORONTO
J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.

1917

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PREFACE

THIS little unofficial pamphlet is issued in the hope of interesting a wider circle of booklovers (especially in the United States) in the upbuilding of a new library for the University of Louvain. In order to give my readers a proper background and to refresh their memory, I have sketched very briefly the history of the University, drawing largely upon the work of a member of its Faculty: "Louvain, 891-1914, par L. Noël" (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1915). For the facts concerning the University Library I am chiefly indebted to the series of lectures on the University given by the librarian, Professor Paul Delannoy, before the Collège de France, in February, 1915 (Paris, Picard, 1915). The account of the destruction of the library has intentionally been made as brief as possible, and references to the mode and motives of the invaders are minimised. My object is not to add to the discussion centring around Louvain, but to direct attention to the opportunity for help.

In writing this paper I have had the sympathetic help of Dr. Leon van der Essen, Professor of History of the University of Louvain. During his stay in America, in 1915, he lectured at many places, and succeeded in arousing some interest in the co-operative plans for the reconstruction of the library. I am permitted to quote him as saying that the lasting gratitude of the Belgians for the relief extended them by the Americans is an additional reason for Belgian students wishing to know more about the history and institutions of the United States. A guarantee of this can be had by seeing to it that in the new library of the revived University there shall be a good representation of our best historians, our best writers in both prose and poetry, and a collection of the chief American authorities in science, medicine and technology.

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The University of Louvain will rise again, Phoenix-like, from its ashes. New halls will become the home of science, and knowledge will find an asylum there as of old. Over the main door of the destroyed Halles was the inscription:

“ Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum.”

Those familiar with the spirit of Louvain can see with the eye of faith a new and grander pile of buildings over the portals of which can again be inscribed the words, “ Wisdom has built for herself a house.” All scholars are invited to participate in equipping this new house with suitable books. American librarians and library committees can contribute material aid by giving of their riches. Many precious additions can be culled from the stock of duplicates in the older university and college libraries. Few American institutions are without extra sets of journals and reference books for which they have no use, and which are in fact only taking up space in attic and basement. A committee should be formed actively to solicit offers of such gifts and to co-operate with the British Committee so as to avoid overlapping.

T. W. K.

LONDON, *July 4, 1917.*

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THE OLD MARKET PLACE
WITH THE UNIVERSITY ON THE RIGHT AND ST. PETER'S CHURCH IN THE BACKGROUND

THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN

As a centre of humanism the University of Louvain transformed the education of Belgium. It produced not only great scholars, but also trained statesmen and devoted teachers. Its influence spread not only over the whole of Europe, but throughout the civilised world.

Through the mediation of the Duke of Brabant, a patron of literature and the fine arts, Pope Martin V was induced to issue a bull sanctioning the foundation of the University, which was established in 1425. But from the first the civic authorities had a part in its activities. For more than two hundred years professors and students shared a portion of the Clothmakers' Hall with the merchants.

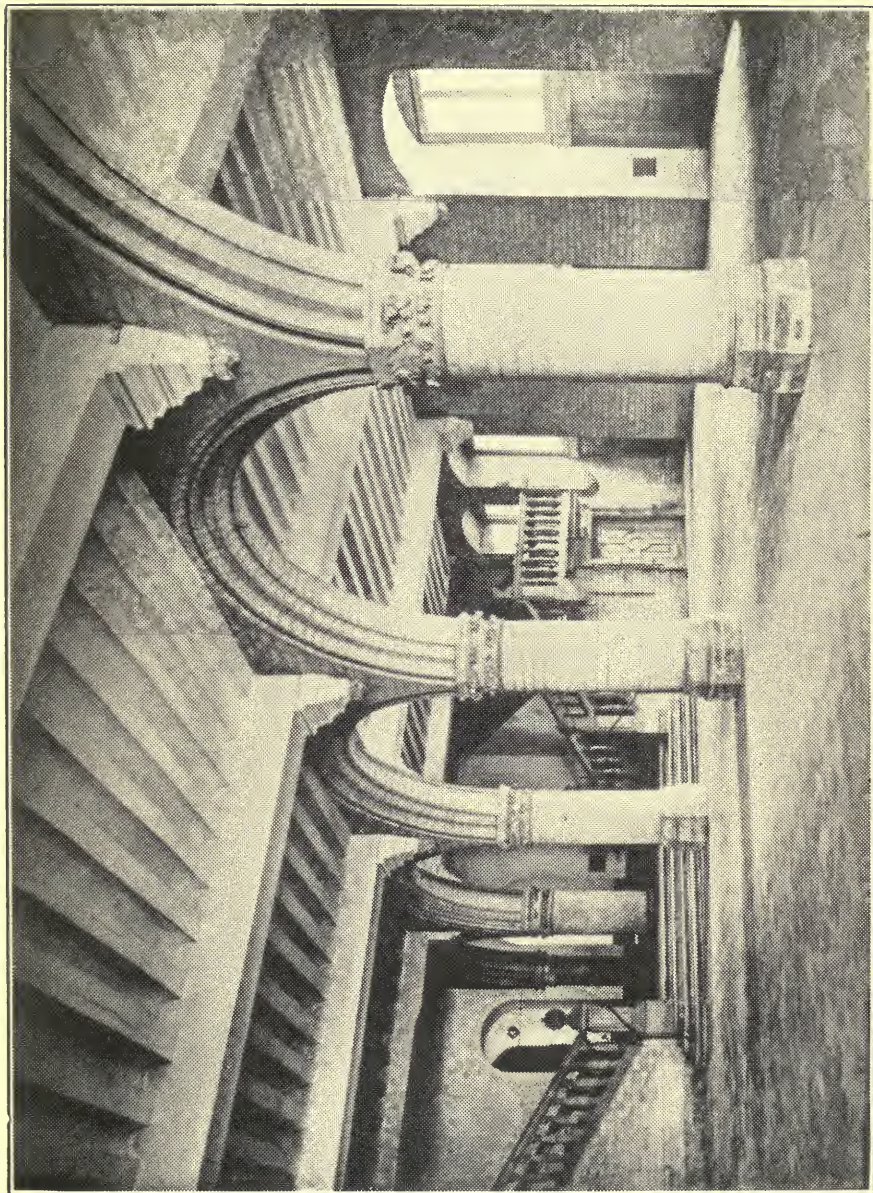
In 1502 Erasmus, a native of Rotterdam, arrived at Louvain, which he revisited several times in the course of subsequent travels across Europe, and where he found a circle of admirers and friends. Among these may be mentioned such men as Despautère, Paludanus and the printer Martens. Besides these there was Jean Nevius who made his *Collège du Lys* an active centre of classical studies, where the students succeeded in presenting the comedies of Plautus.

In 1517 Busleiden left funds for a college in which Greek should be taught. Erasmus, who was called to Louvain as the head of this college, succeeded in a little more than two years in inspiring a group of educational workers who gave to Louvain a position among the Universities second only to that of Paris. He resided in Louvain more or less continuously from 1517 to 1521, when he was at the height of his fame, and secured for his staff some of the best humanists of his time. He defended these men, and also the college, with its new Renaissance aims, against the attacks of scholastic theologians and philosophers. Humanism was not concerned with a purely

literary ideal, but affected both the political and religious life. It aimed its darts against the ruling ideas and institutions of the day in biting satire, of which the best expression is found in the "Praise of Folly" by Erasmus. This work was dedicated to the English humanist, Sir Thomas More, who a little later published, at Louvain, a no less celebrated satire, "Utopia." Erasmus's *editio princeps* of the Greek Testament, with Latin translation, though accomplished in England, found its friends and enemies in the author's Louvain period, and established the absolute leadership of Erasmus "from Louvain" in all critical work. It was he who had brought the new spirit of Renaissance scholarship to the realities of life, especially in connection with classical authors, the Bible and the early Fathers.

Nicholas Clenard, a Louvain student, entering into the new enthusiasm for letters and the new interpretation of life, looked forward to the idea of a pacific instead of a military crusade. He began the study of Arabic without books, working his way to Spain in the company of Ferdinand Columbus (son of the great Christopher), whose aim was to found a great Renaissance library at Seville, and who was enlisting paid coadjutors. Clenard pursued Arabic studies at Salamanca, Evora and Braga, and taught Latin by the *direct method*. He even purchased three slaves for linguistic experiments. His life aim was to establish a great Oriental college at Louvain, in which to train missionary crusaders for the Moslem peoples.

The sixteenth century is perhaps the most brilliant epoch in the history of Louvain. The Low Countries were united, and the political strength of their princes, without intervening in the exterior affairs of the University, assured it a considerable prestige abroad and a wide circle of influence. The humanistic movement sweeping through Europe meant a striving toward a higher type of culture. The ideas of the Middle Ages seemed no longer to satisfy, and the restless spirits were looking about for new intellectual channels, which they believed to have been discovered in the thoughts and works of the ancients.



GROUND FLOOR OF THE UNIVERSITY HALLS
WITH STAIRWAYS LEADING TO THE LIBRARY OVERHEAD

The study of antiquity became then the road by which they hoped to attain to a superior development, to a culture *humanior*. For the bad Latin of the Middle Ages were substituted the study and usage of the pure Latin of the best Roman writers. There was also added the study of Greek and of Hebrew, which was hardly known during the Middle Ages.

In this humanistic movement the Faculty of Arts of Louvain University took a leading part. The ideas of the Renaissance spread throughout the Low Countries, which at that time were among the richest and most advanced in Europe. The centre of the movement in Louvain was the chair of rhetoric in the Faculty of Arts, of which the holder bore the title *Rhetor publicus*. At the beginning of the sixteenth century it was occupied by Jean du Marais, who called himself in Latin, Paludanus. Latin grammar was studied in conjunction with rhetoric, and from Louvain were issued the Latin manuals by Jean Custos of Brecht, by Clenard, and by Despautère of Diest.

The humanistic movement flourished especially until 1575, when Leyden was founded and divided the scholarship of the Low Countries. Douai also drew upon Louvain, which until 1575 had great international influence, for the University had not only Erasmus, Vives, Clenard, Rescius, Justus Lipsius, but among men of science she numbered Vesalius, the founder of modern anatomy, Dodonée, the physician botanist, and Mercator, the geographer. Surely these names would add lustre to any institution.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the student population numbered about 3000, distributed in 43 colleges. The system of colleges within the University bore a resemblance to the organisation of Oxford and Cambridge. While Louvain did not have the European position which it had enjoyed in the previous century, it was still quite important. The doctrines of Descartes were the object of animated discussion, but the University as a whole remained faithful to the traditional Aristotelianism. In the Faculty of Arts, De Nelis was formulating a philosophy somewhat similar to that of Berkeley;

Minckelers was carrying on important research work in physics; and in the Faculty of Medicine the new period decidedly surpassed the preceding era.

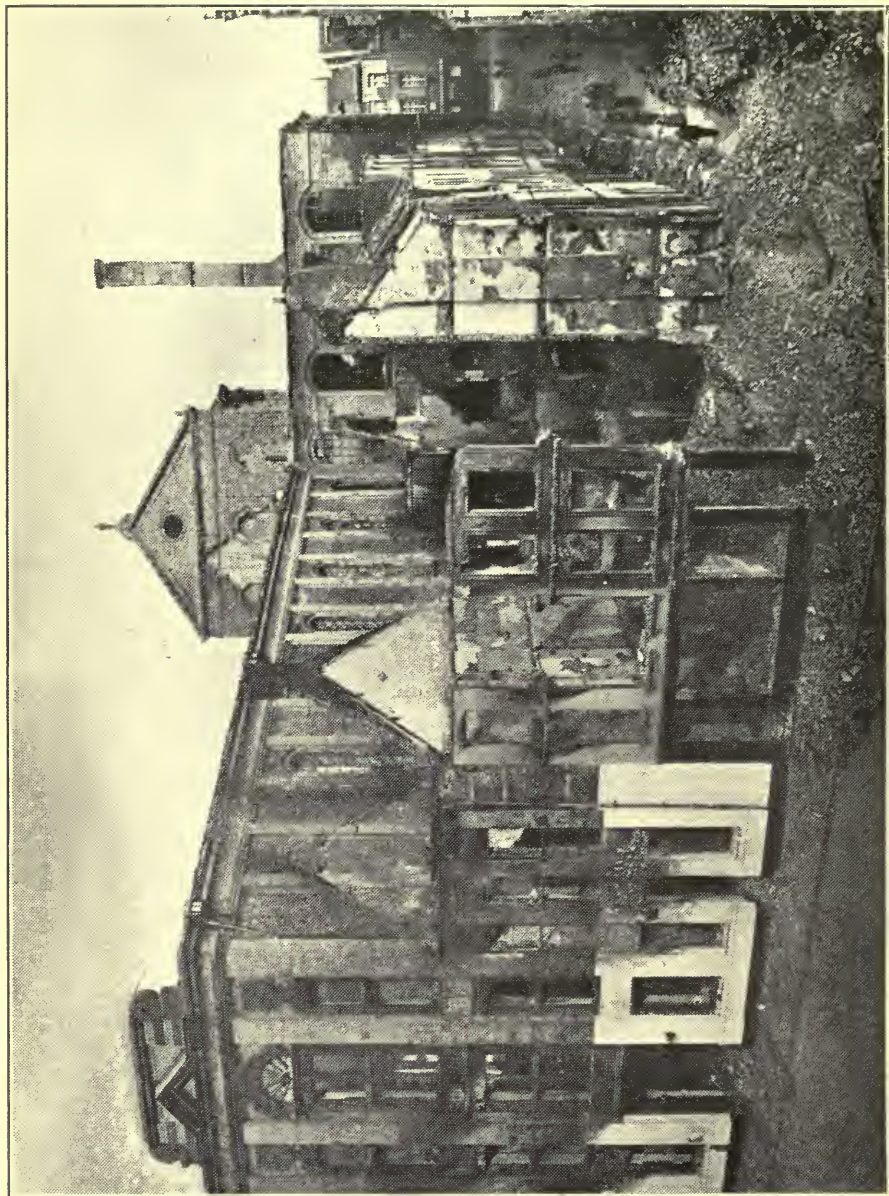
The continuity of University life at Louvain was broken by the French Revolution. At the fall of the Empire in 1814 there were hopes of restoring the *Alma Mater*, but the Dutch government intervened, and established three state universities in Belgium in 1816—one at Ghent, another at Liège, and a third at Louvain.

In 1835 a law was passed organising higher education according to the spirit of the constitution. It established two state universities, leaving open the question of locality, and it suppressed the faculties created by the Dutch state. As a result, a university was founded at Brussels with the support of the city; another at Malines by the Bishops of Belgium.

The municipal authorities of Louvain had looked after the empty University buildings, for which they had no use, and they now offered them to the University of Malines. The offer was accepted, and the new University installed in the ancient buildings of the old Louvain University on December 1, 1835.

With the limited space at our command it is impossible for us to trace step by step the rapid growth of the restored University of Louvain. Briefly stated, it was for eighty years under the direction of rectors who developed scientific specialisation. The University could not legally hold any funds. It never received any subsidy from the State. The students, who were often poor, paid only small fees, the total of which was but a small contribution to the budget of the institution. The University lived almost entirely upon the charity of the Belgian Catholics and by the devotion of its teachers.

Instruction never absorbed the entire attention of the teaching force at Louvain. Teaching is not the only function of a university, possibly not even its principal function. The true university is a City of Universal Knowledge. It labours to sustain and to increase the sum total of human knowledge. Doubtless it communicates the elements of knowledge to



RUINS OF THE UNIVERSITY

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
427 ANGELES
NORMAN SCHOOL

studious youth, but this task of instruction is subordinated to a higher work. Before communicating the riches of knowledge one must possess them—and knowledge is not a thing dead and fixed; it is alive, and exists only in a changing, evolving and constantly progressing state. One gains it solely by working tirelessly to keep it alive and growing. The university is above all a centre of scientific life, of research, of discussion. Teaching is but the echo of this life.

This conception of university life had more and more penetrated all the efforts of the restored University of Louvain. Perhaps nowhere else were work and scientific production held in higher regard. The system of academic grades organised by the University, the development of different schools, all tended to prepare for investigation and to stimulate research. More than thirty scientific reviews were published at the University, and the contributions were largely from members of the faculty and advanced students.

In answer to the question, Can a Catholic university truly participate in the modern scientific life? Professor Noël points to Louvain as an answer in the affirmative. In all fields research has been carried on, he says, with the most perfect technical equipment, with the most complete breadth of view, and with the fullest liberty. If the Louvain investigators have been able to reconcile their scientific research with their Catholic faith, it is evidently because such reconciliation requires no effort. They have not had to sacrifice their freedom of research to their faith, nor their convictions to these researches. "One must have lived at Louvain," says Noël, "to appreciate fully the atmosphere which one breathed there, the large and generous feeling which scientific investigations give to religious ideas, and also to habits of devotion, the attitude of modesty and of intellectual honesty with which Christian surroundings can inspire scientific workers. In the light of this experience one understands what science as well as faith have lost in the waning of the religious life in our modern universities."

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

THE University was for more than two centuries without a general library. The humanist Puteanus says that the professors were themselves living libraries, and that the books which they wrote were worth all the riches of a library. Both faculty and students frequented the bookshops, which were popular resorts for those attached to the numerous Colleges and religious establishments. Jasper's bookshop was the one most favoured by the students, while professors and instructors flocked to the publishing house of Thierry Martens, of whom it has been said that he was to Belgium what Aldus Manutius was to Venice. Interesting talks took place in the bookshops of Louvain, says one writer. The Parc Abbey and the convents allowed the University teachers to consult their rich collections.

Later, the Colleges remedied this lack of books, and many of them built up their own libraries. In the minutes of the University faculty we find some details on the library of the Arts faculty. Certain rules date back to 1466. For example, it is expressly forbidden to enter the book room with a light, or to borrow books from it.

The demand for a large central or public library was hardly prevalent at Louvain before the beginning of the 17th century, though the prime necessity for such an adjunct to research was fully appreciated. As far back as the Middle Ages there was current a saying that a convent without a library was like a castle without an arsenal. Thomas à Kempis added that it was like a table without dishes, a garden without flowers, a purse without money.

The University Library owes its origin to a former Louvain student, Laurent Beyerlinck, canon of the Cathedral of Antwerp. In 1627 he bequeathed to the University his own library

of 852 volumes, rich in history and theology. This bequest constituted the first foundation. It was followed by a legacy of 906 volumes from the professor of medicine, Jacques Romanus, in 1635. A son of the celebrated mathematician, Romanus transmitted his father's library and added his own medical books. The library was organised by the University rector, Cornelius Jansenius, and in 1636 a librarian was appointed—Professor Valerius Andreas, a historian of note, who presided at the public opening of the library on August 22, 1636. The books were installed in the old Clothmakers' Hall in the auditorium of the Faculty of Medicine. At this time the library contained about 1700 volumes. An annual grant for its upkeep and increase was made by Jacques Boonen, Archbishop of Malines. It is to Andreas that we owe the *Fasti Academici*, the most complete chronicle of the history of the University. Soon after the opening of the library he published a catalogue of the volumes bequeathed by Beyerlinck and Romanus.

Upon the occasion of the appointment of Andreas as the first librarian, he delivered an address in which he spoke of the precious advantages of a library, which he called "The Temple of Minerva and of the Muses, the Arsenal of all the Sciences."

After the death of Andreas, the library was neglected until the beginning of the 18th century. A former Louvain professor, Dominique Snellaerts, a canon of Antwerp, had a fine collection of 3500 volumes composed almost entirely of Jansenist works. In response to the pressing requests of the librarian of the University that Snellaerts should give them to the University, the owner replied that he did not like to meet books with his name at the door or in the window of dealers. He said that he had often seen, in the bookshops of Louvain and elsewhere, a line of books bearing the names of celebrated men, and left by them to the University. Despite this statement, Snellaerts bequeathed his library to the University.



INTERIOR VIEW OF THE LIBRARY

This generous gift necessitated the construction of a new depository, a task undertaken by the Rector Rega, a man of great initiative, the founder of the anatomical museum. Rega succeeded also in procuring for the library a fixed income. A wing was added to the old Halles, in the direction of the Vieux Marché, and completed in 1730. A new and progressive element was brought in by the administration of C. F. de Nelis, who became librarian in 1752. His first act was to ask the Government to require Belgian printers to send to the University Library at least one copy of every book printed by them. During the librarianship of Jean François van de Velde (1771-97) the library acquired 12,000 volumes. Most of these books were bought at sales of the libraries of the Jesuits, after the suppression of the Society. They included a special collection of theses of great value for the history of theological doctrine. But besides these, Van de Velde added 4573 new books. In 1795, under the French régime, the Commissioners of the Republic took away about 5000 volumes, among which were some of the most precious manuscripts. In 1797 De la Serna Santander was authorised to make a selection of all the works which in his opinion could be useful to the *École Centrale* established at Brussels. After a ten days' culling, the French Commissioner took away 718 volumes—which were never returned. By an Imperial Decree of Napoleon, dated December 12, 1805, the University Library became the property of the city. However, in 1835, at the time of the re-establishment of the University at Louvain, the municipal authorities handed over the precious depository to the care of the University.

It is very difficult to estimate the number of volumes which the library contained at the time of the fire. "Minerva," and Collard in his "Annuaire des Bibliothèques de Belgique," give the number as 230,000, an estimate rather below the real number of books. The catalogue was being revised under the supervision of Professor Delannoy, the librarian, who estimated the total number of books as somewhere between 250,000 and 300,000 volumes. In making a systematic inventory of the

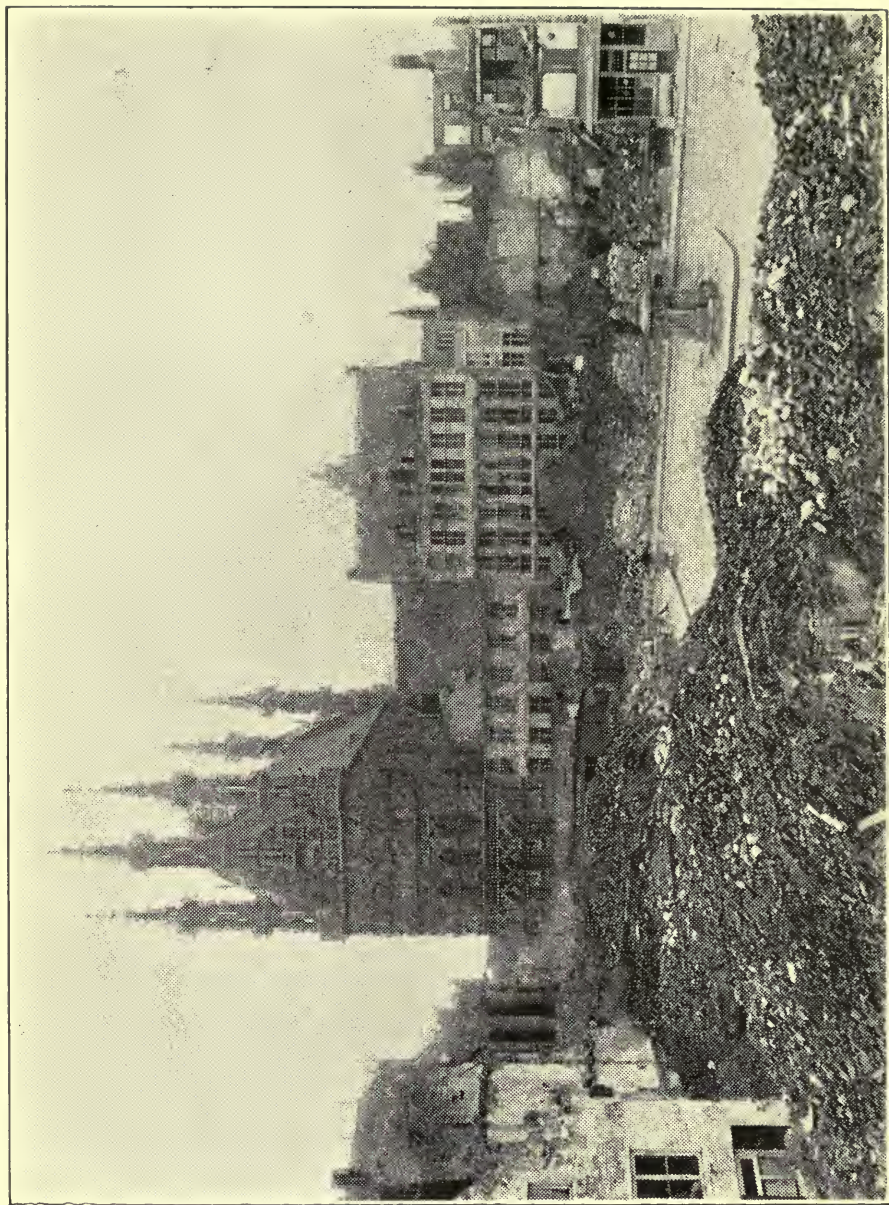
theological section, there were discovered, almost daily, unknown treasures which for two centuries had slept beneath a cover of dust. The early publications of the first reformers, and the politico-religious pamphlets, were particularly numerous. Little by little, all the literature of the religious struggles of the Low Countries was coming to light. The University had taken an active part in all these disputes, and pious hands had collected into volumes the letters and pamphlets touching on these discussions. Most of these volumes contained more than a hundred items each. On the backs of the parchment bindings were such inscriptions as "Varia Reformatoria," or "Janseniana," or "Jesuitica."

The library possessed also a magnificent collection of more than 350 *incunabula*, and a precious series of successive editions of the Bible. Almost equally precious was a unique collection of *Jesuitica*, relating not only to the Jesuits of the Low Countries, but also to those in different parts of Europe. These came from the purchases made at the end of the 18th century, and had been carefully catalogued. There was also an unrivalled collection of publications relating to the Jansenists. The rôle played by the University in the history of Jansenism, together with Snellaerts's legacy, explain sufficiently both the importance and the completeness of this collection. In addition there had been recently unearthed a collection of political pamphlets of the time of the Thirty Years' War, and of the French invasion of Belgium in the time of Louis XIV. Professor van der Essen is convinced that there were in the library several unique copies of the polemical writings of the 17th century, and particularly of treatises of the class to which the "Mars Gallicus" of Jansenius belongs.

It is impossible to enumerate all the bibliographical rarities and typographical curiosities in which every repository of ancient books justly takes pride; mention may, however, be made of a collection of old atlases, a rich Oriental library containing the works of Félix Nève, a collection of Germanic philology formerly belonging to the late Professor Alberdink Thym.



THE OLD MARKET PLACE
WITH THE UNIVERSITY ON THE RIGHT AND THE TOWN HALL IN THE BACKGROUND



THE OLD MARKET PLACE

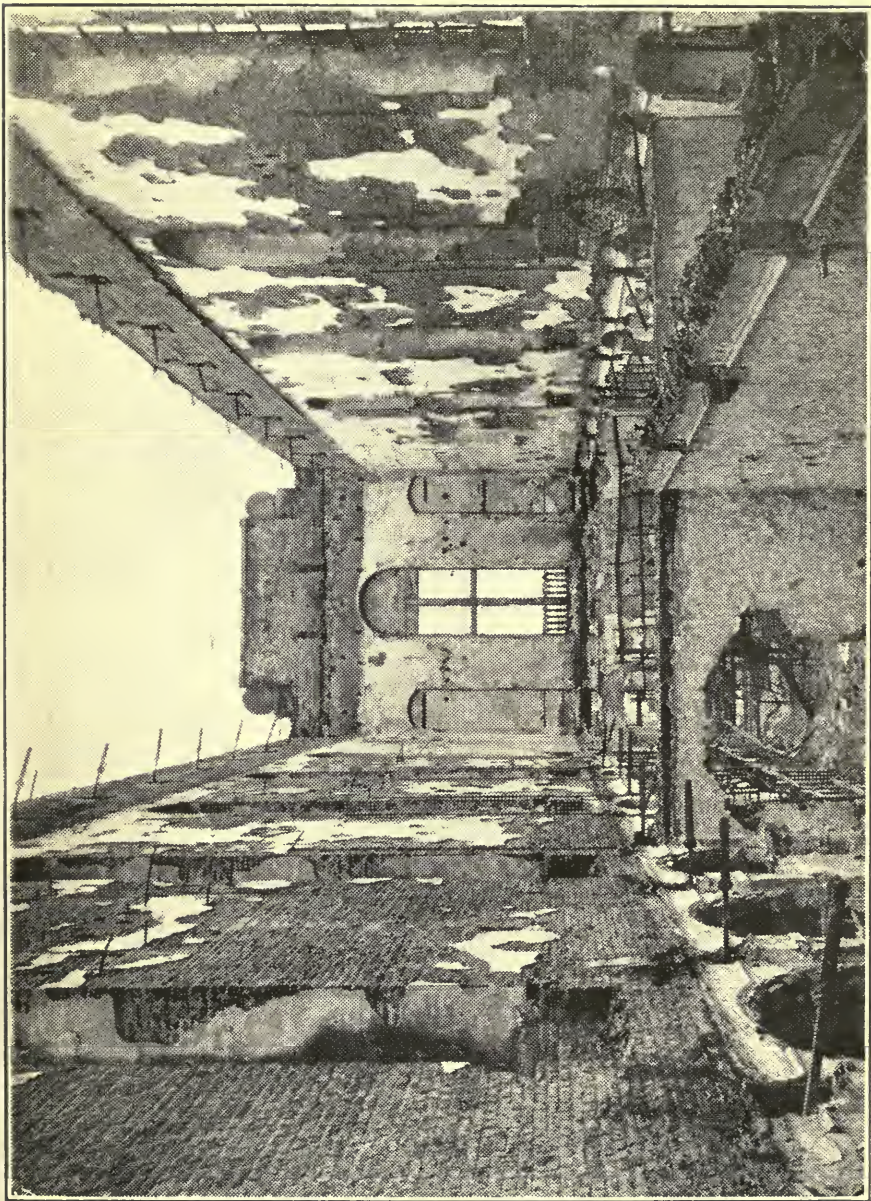
The manuscript section of the library contained more than 950 pieces. Among these treasures were included several manuscripts of the 12th century, showing typical examples of the post-Carolingian writing, Lives of the Saints (the best of which was fortunately published), psalters, books of hours, and liturgical manuals of the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries. Several codices contained magnificent illuminations and full-page miniatures. Perhaps the most important section of the manuscripts was a part of the older archives of the University. As far back as 1445, the University took adequate measures for the preservation of its archives: a fine was imposed on those who retained in their possession letters addressed to the *Studium*. To be able to consult these documents, a special permission from the proper authority, as well as delegated witnesses, was necessary. In the second half of the 18th century the documents concerning the *Alma Mater* were numerous, and were preserved with care in the University halls. Carefully prepared catalogues of them have come down to us in part.

The archives had been preserved at Louvain, when, in 1794 before the invasion of the French army, fifteen boxes of documents were sent to Rotterdam. Upon the success of the French forces, it was thought that Rotterdam was hardly a safe depository, and they were consequently sent by Groningen, Bremen and Hamburg to Altona, whither seven other cases were sent direct from Louvain. The victorious French demanded the archives, the greater part of which were delivered to them, and are still to be found in the General Archives at Brussels. Some of the cases were stranded in Holland, where some documents are still preserved at the Seminary of Haaren; others were retained at Beveren-Waes by the librarian Van de Velde. At his death, his rich library, containing MSS. of the professors, was dispersed to the highest bidders, but the pieces belonging to the archives of the University were left at Ghent, where they are preserved at the Seminary. Some documents from the archives, carefully hidden in 1794, are still preserved

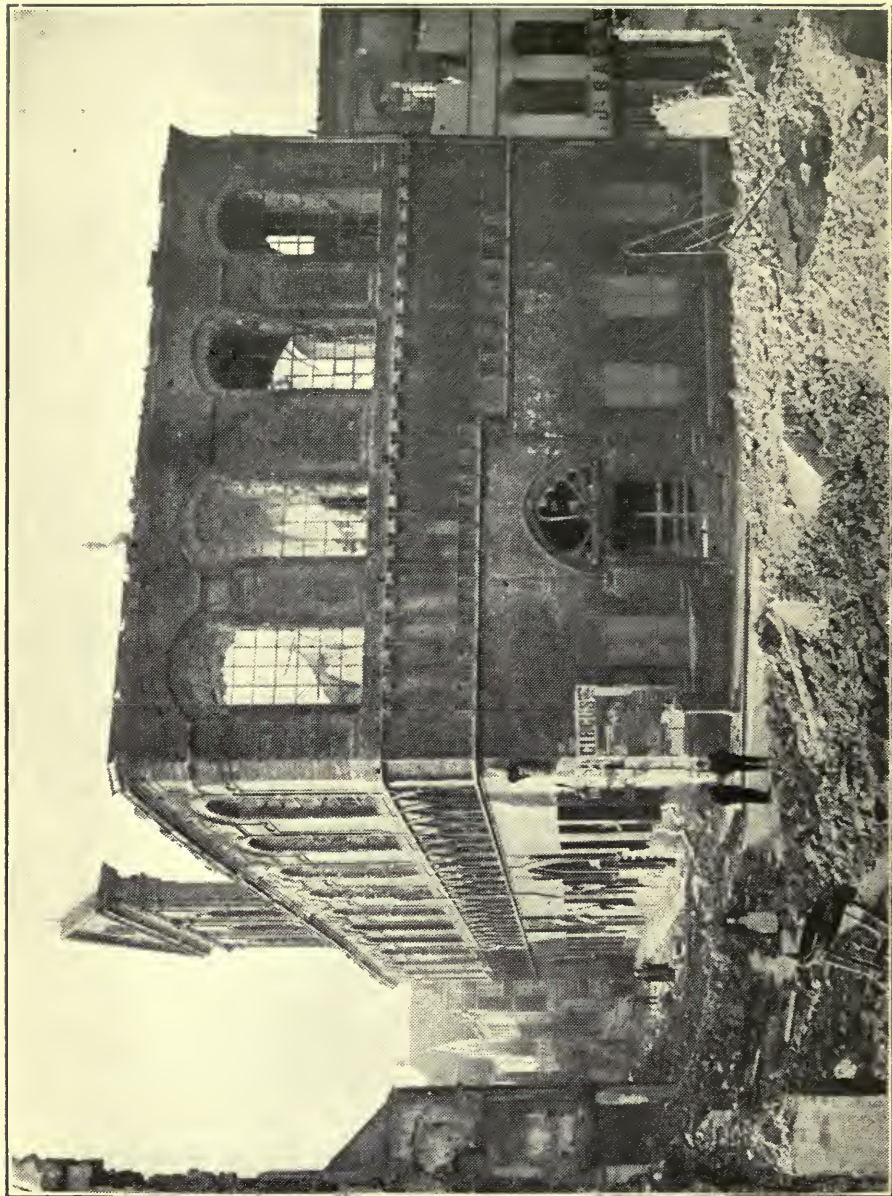
here and there; some are even in private collections. When, shortly before the war, it was necessary to take down all the old books which had long lain under a thick coat of dust, there were found bundles of old papers in an out-of-the-way corner of the Halle, among others the journal of Van de Velde touching on the events in which he had taken part during the revolutionary crisis. The occupation of the Colleges by the French troops was minutely described. Van de Velde, escaping across the fields, had been seized by the soldiers, then released after his purse had been relieved of the little money it contained. In a concealed envelope was found the decree suppressing the University, with a note on the envelope from Van de Velde regarding the importance of the contents.

All visitors to the old library will recall the famous autograph manuscript of Thomas à Kempis, and the vellum copy of the famous work of Vesalius, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, which was presented to the library by the Emperor Charles V. In 1909, when the University celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of its reorganisation, the Bishop of Bois-le-Duc returned to the University the original papal bull relating to its foundation. It had been in the possession of the Seminary at Haaren (Northern Brabant) from the time of Napoleon.

In the beautiful room reserved for historical books were various cabinets filled with *curiosa*—rarities and souvenirs of the University. There was a large numismatic collection and a collection of signatures of famous visitors, a large representation of old leather bindings, some maps of the world and geographical globes of the time of Mercator, and a copy of the reproduction of the famous Grimani Breviary.



INTERIOR VIEW OF THE DESTROYED LIBRARY



THE OLD CLOTHMAKERS' HALL, CONTAINING THE LIBRARY QUARTERS ON THE UPPER FLOOR
LOOKING DOWN THE RUE DE NAMUR

DESTRUCTION OF THE LIBRARY

"Do you believe the treasures of the Louvain Library are burnt?" asked M. E. Durham in the *Times* of November 4, 1915, writing from France. "We do not," said he, in answer to his own question. "Vanloads of stuff left the place before the fire." In the November 18th issue of the same paper, Professor Leon van der Essen, writing from Oxford, contradicted Mr. Durham's statement, having recently seen the Librarian, Professor Delannoy, who went to the spot on August 27, 1914, to see whether anything could perhaps be saved. "He spoke with one of the officers of the library, who was present at the fire, but who was prevented from doing anything in order to save the books and manuscripts," wrote Professor van der Essen. "During the fire the doors of the library remained locked, as they had been since the outbreak of the war. The Germans did not penetrate the building, but contented themselves with smashing the main window looking on the Vieux Marché. Through that window they introduced some inflammable liquid and fired a few shots, causing an immediate explosion. In such a way, by the use of chemicals, may be explained the fact that on the morning of the 26th the whole library was already destroyed, a thing which would have been impossible in the case of the building being accidentally set on fire by the neighbouring houses. No soldier entered the library during the fire, and no book and no manuscript was taken away.

"The story that books were removed from the University Library originated in the following manner. Quite near to the University Library was located a library directed by the Jesuit Fathers, called the *Bibliothèque Choisie*. Here the books were removed in carts and conveyed to the station. The citizens of Louvain, on seeing these books go through the

streets, imagined they were the books of the University Library. On the night of Tuesday, the 25th, a father of the Josephite College, which is located a few yards from the spot where the Germans smashed the main window, called the attention of the commanding officer to the fact that the building he was going to destroy was the University Library. The officer replied, textually, 'Es ist Befehl!' It was then 11 p.m. These are the facts."

M. Henri Davignon, Secretary of the Belgian Commission of Inquiry, published in the *Times* for October 19, 1916, a letter setting forth some of the facts relating to the destruction of the town of Louvain. These facts have been established by Belgian and neutral witnesses, and even by Germans themselves, in a manner which M. Davignon thinks would prove convincing to any court of inquiry.

(1) On the evening of August 25, 1914, several parts of the town were set on fire at a given signal.

(2) This act was committed by German soldiers (under the orders of their officers) who had been provided with the means for its thorough accomplishment.

(3) The Church of St. Pierre was set on fire from the roof, which is much higher than the buildings surrounding it, and in the interior by means of piles of chairs.

(4) The "Halles" and the University Library took fire and burned without any attempt being made to save them. No books could have been saved.

(5) The Town Hall was spared because the German military authorities were quartered there.

(6) The fire thus started destroyed 1120 houses. It continued for three days, and no efforts to check it were made—indeed, the German officers forbade any such attempt. In the square in front of the station several residents of the town were shot; many escaped by the Tirlemont, Malines and Brussels roads; and many more were taken as prisoners to Germany.

Dr. L. H. Grondys, formerly Professor of Physics at the Technical Institute of Dordrecht, in his little book "The

Germans in Belgium; Experiences of a Neutral" (London, Heinemann), records under August 26 the following: "The Monastery at Parc was full of refugees; the brethren told me they had been present at the fire throughout the night. At two o'clock they noticed a recrudescence of the flames; brilliant sparks flew up in an immense column of fire. It was the *incunabula*, the precious *Livres d'Heures*, the rare manuscripts of the early Middle Ages, just discovered, which were burning. Thus the Monastery knew before the town that the incomparable library, the glory and pride of numerous generations, was lost for ever. In several periodicals it has been suggested that the Germans at Louvain wished simply to rob the library. The supposition seems to me to be ill-founded. The library was set on fire at one or two o'clock in the morning. The garrison was in a state of disorder and a prey to the gravest anxiety, expecting an attack from the Belgians. It is incredible that they should have proposed to carry off a library of more than 300,000 volumes within four hours! Any one who has the least idea of what a University Library like that of Louvain is, will understand my scepticism."

Professor Grondys tells of the arrest and searching of the priests who were fleeing from Louvain in the direction of Brussels. "Nothing suspicious was found," says he, "except on one of the younger Jesuits, Père Dupierreux, who had a little note-book, bearing the following remark, in French: 'When formerly I read that the Huns under Attila had devastated towns, and that the Arabs had burnt the Library of Alexandria, I smiled. Now that I have seen with my own eyes the hordes of to-day, burning churches and the celebrated Library of Louvain, I smile no longer.'"

Professor van der Essen saved by chance the manuscript No. 906, which contains the official correspondence of the University from 1583 to about 1637.

"There is nothing dramatic," he said, "about the way in which I saved the unique manuscript from our library. I personally was not in Louvain when the town was burned. I

had left it six days before its destruction. But I was there all the time from the outbreak of the war until the entry of the German troops. I had served as civic guard since July 31. The civic guard are not 'francs-tireurs' (snipers), of course, but wear a military uniform, are armed with the Mauser rifle, and are commanded by regular officers appointed by the King. In America you would call them militia. Louvain, as an open town, was not to be defended. So we men of the civic guard were all disarmed on the morning of August 19, at a quarter to 6 o'clock. Our arms were sent by train to the fortress at Antwerp, upon which the Belgian army was falling back. We remained unarmed at the station until 8 o'clock. We assisted, full of despair, at the departure of the Belgian headquarters. I had three-quarters of an hour to go to my home, awaken my family, and get together some clothing for my two babies, one of them only fifteen days old, being born the very day of the declaration of war on Belgium. In great haste I gathered together some papers, among which was the manuscript from the University of Louvain Library, which I had had at my home for consultation. I preferred to save this before all else in the way of personal property, and left all my belongings behind. Fearing that the precious manuscript might be lost during our exile, on our trip through Belgium to England I stopped at the little town of ———, near Ghent, and in the garden of a house there I buried it, enclosed in a little iron safe. It is still there, and I hope I shall take it out of its place of safety when we shall have the pleasure of returning after Belgium's evacuation." ¹

¹ Reported by George H. Sargent in the *Boston Transcript*. Summarised in the *Literary Digest*, August 7, 1915, pp. 250-251.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE LIBRARY

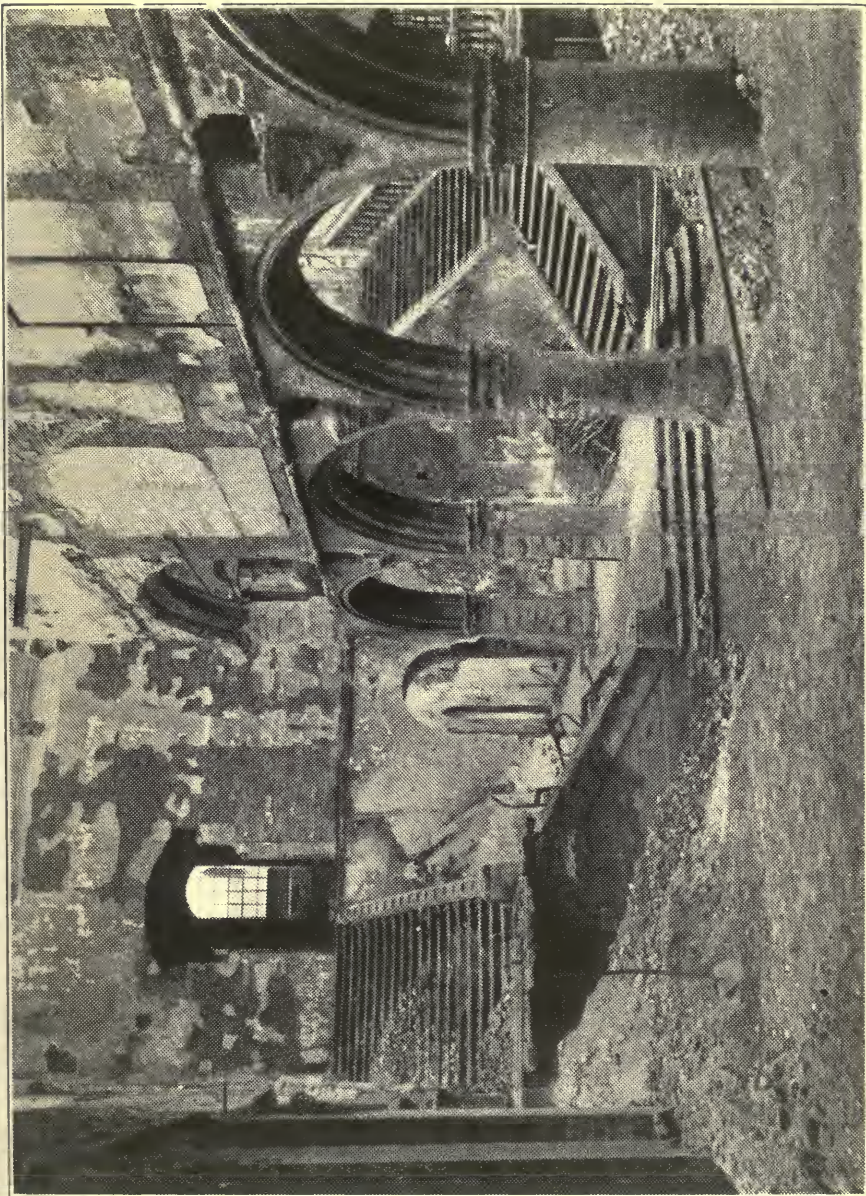
THE University of Louvain has always been poor. There were never any state subsidies, yet by remarkable efforts of charity, devotion and loyalty it was able to maintain an honoured place among the great modern universities. There is danger that it will be poorer than ever before. It is hoped that a widespread generosity and sympathy will see to it that the irreparable loss will to a certain extent be made good, that the institution will once more be adequately equipped and housed. In the work of reconstruction no help will be unwelcome, no gift, however modest, uncherished.

At a meeting of the Council of Governors of the John Rylands Library, held in December, 1914, it was resolved to give some practical expression of the deep feeling of sympathy with the authorities of the University of Louvain in the calamity which they had suffered through the destruction of their buildings and their famous library of over a quarter of a million volumes. It was decided that this expression of sympathy should take the form of a gift of books: a set of the publications of the John Rylands Library and a selection from their stock of duplicates. A list of upwards of two hundred volumes was prepared and sent with the offer of help to the Louvain authorities, through the medium of Professor A. Carnoy, then residing in Cambridge. In his grateful acknowledgment of the gift, Professor Carnoy said that this was "one of the very first acts which tends to the preparation of our revival."

The University of Louvain being dismembered and without a home, the John Rylands Library undertook to house the volumes which were to form the nucleus of the new library until new quarters should be erected in Louvain. An appeal for the co-operation of other libraries, institutions and private

individuals was printed in the *Bulletin* of the John Rylands Library. Thanks to the spreading of the appeal by means of the Press, it met with an immediate and generous response from many parts of the world. The National Library of Wales and the Lisbon Academy of Sciences were among the earliest institutions to co-operate by sending their own publications, and offering to send any books that might be entrusted to them. The University of Aberdeen, as a first instalment, offered about one hundred and fifty of their duplicates. The Committee of the Liverpool University Press promised a set of their publications. The University of Durham allowed a selection to be made from their duplicates, and thus some hundreds of volumes were acquired which would be difficult to get in any other way. The University of Manchester is giving a set of the publications of its University Press, together with a considerable number of duplicates from the Christie Library. The Classical Association has decided to assist in the reconstruction of the classical side.

Professor van der Essen, in a letter to Mr. Henry Guppy, Librarian of the John Rylands Library, said: "Writing as a Professor of the University of Louvain, let me thank you for all that you have done for it since the crime of Louvain. It is such a wonderful thing in this time of horror to see how the scholars of all the countries—the Central Empires excepted, alas!—have manifested their friendship and proved to us by so many deeds and words that scientific international solidarity is still alive. Especially has England done splendid work, and among that work I rank your . . . initiative as one of the most, if not the most effective. I had, indeed, opportunity in America to see what your appeal was bringing forth, and how by your kind intermediary practical help was being prepared. It is noble work that you are doing, work that will have a fine result, and I can assure you that never will the University of Louvain forget that the appeal went out from Manchester. . . . I hope to have the pleasure to come . . . and to witness the birth of our poor library, on the very soil of your splendid



GROUND FLOOR OF THE DESTROYED UNIVERSITY HALLS

and glorious country. . . . It is a fact full of consequence that what has been destroyed will have to be restored by the kind intermediary of one of the celebrated centres of English culture."

The Belgian Minister of Justice and Count Goblet d'Alviella went to Manchester to speak a few words of comfort and cheer to the large number of Belgian refugees who had found a temporary home in that city. They visited the John Rylands Library, and were much surprised to find there the beginnings of a new library for the University of Louvain.

A committee was formed under the leadership of Viscount Bryce, as President of the British Academy, to co-operate with the Institut de France in the formation of an International Committee which should have for its aim the restoration of the University of Louvain and its library. Learned societies and the principal libraries throughout the country were invited to appoint delegates to assist in the realisation of this object. Sir Alfred Hopkinson and Mr. Guppy were appointed to represent the John Rylands Library, with which there is complete co-operation. A small executive committee, with Lord Muir Mackenzie as chairman, was formed to work in connection with the French committee.

In the *Times* of October 3, 1916, Lord Muir Mackenzie announced that the Executive Committee thought that it was time to take steps to obtain contributions, either independently or in co-operation with similar committees in France and elsewhere. He was of the opinion that the experience of the John Rylands Library proved that many people were both able and willing to come forward with books and other help. Communications from sympathisers were therefore invited, and in particular it was suggested that lists of descriptions of books which persons desirous of aiding in the work were willing to give might be sent to the Committee. It was stated that Mr. Hugh Butler, Librarian of the House of Lords, acting as Secretary of the Committee, would be glad to correspond with any one as to the classes of books likely to be acceptable to

Louvain, as well as to give any further information that might be desired. Some preliminary expenses had to be met, and donations, not exceeding two guineas from each donor, were solicited.

On December 8, 1916, it was announced that the scheme had led to the accumulation of upwards of 8000 volumes. Institutions have made liberal donations of suitable works from their stores of duplicates, and many book collectors have given volumes of great interest, sometimes of great rarity. The list of donors includes the names of struggling students and working men who have parted with treasured possessions acquired through the exercise of economy and self-denial. While these gifts constitute an excellent nucleus for the new library, much remains to be done before the work of replacement is anything like completed. A mere beginning has been made. There should be a co-ordination of the efforts which are being put forth in several directions.

It is sincerely hoped that the important publications of the United States Government, as well as those issued by our learned societies, especially in the domain of history, will be added to the new university library. While no number of such gifts would "restore" the Louvain Library, yet, if the American universities and institutions do their share, a substantial foundation can be laid for a new working collection.

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