

THE THIRD ITALIAN GEOGRAPHICAL CONGRESS.

On the 12th of April the members of this Congress, to the number of more than three hundred, met in the Aula Magna of the Istituto di Studi Superiori, Florence. After the due installation of a president (Prof. G. Marinelli), vice-presidents (Major-General Vigano, Prof. Dalla Vedova, Prof. Millosevich, and Prof. Stefanelli), and secretaries (Cavaliere Roncagli, Dr. Bonaschi, the advocate Masini, and Prof. D. Vinciguerra), the Congress was opened in the name of H.R.H. the Prince of Naples by Prof. Marinelli, who thereafter introduced the Syndic of Florence (Marchese Torrigiani), by whom, on the part of the Municipality, the delegates were hospitably welcomed.

Prof. Marinelli then delivered the inaugural address, indicating the revival of geographical study among his compatriots, the necessity for its more vigorous prosecution, if only to avoid disastrous experiences in colonial developments, such as had recently occurred, and the gratifying proof of the increasing interest it commanded in the attendance at this third Congress, more numerous and influential than at either of its predecessors. He concluded a loudly applauded discourse with a stirring appeal on behalf of the more extended and more scientific recognition of geography in Italy's national schools.

He was followed by the Under Secretary of State in the Department of Public Instruction, Signor Bonardi, who, after felicitous allusion to Tuscany's past contributions to geographical discovery, culminating in the speculations of Toscanelli and the voyages of Vespucci, whose fourth centenaries Italy was about to celebrate, passed on to the educational value of geography, pledging the department in which he held office to the promotion of its interests in every way possible. Thereafter the Congress adjourned to the Palazzo Vecchio, where in the magnificent rooms of the Quartiere d'Eleonora di Toledo, the Marchese Torrigiani received the delegates, called their attention to the wonderful geographical maps of Danti and the frescoes of Bartolommeo Ghirlandaio, and afterwards entertained them at a sumptuous refecton.

Next day the Congress proceeded to business in the four sections over which its work was distributed :—The Scientific (president, Prof. Fiorini of the University of Bologna); The Economic and Commercial (president, General Pozzolini); The Didactic (president, Prof. Dalla Vedova); and The Historical (president, Prof. Paoli).

In the first of these, Prof. E. H. Giglioli read a paper "On the Opportune Revival in Italy of Oceanographic Research." Much attention was evoked by the author's demonstration that other interests besides those of geography and biology, geology and physics, were involved in the prosecution of the subject. "But a few weeks ago," he said, "my illustrious friend, Prof. John Milne, the most learned of living seismologists, put it in evidence that in the great submarine abysses reside the causes of the terrible earthquakes which desolate now this, now that, continent." Then followed a historical survey of oceanographic research, in which the contributions of British investigators were fully and generously appreciated. Of this important paper, I send to the Society the original in printed form, merely adding that in the discussion it started, the Padre Bertelli, of the Roman Observatory, and Commander Cattolica, Director of the Hydrographic Department of the Royal Navy, took effective part.

In the second section, Dr. Giacomo Gorrini urged the necessity of a thorough examination of the origin and successive stages of the attempts made in Italy under her various rulers to establish colonies, with a view to (1) transportation; (2) emigration and relief of congested centres; (3) commercial expansion; and (4)

"colonie politiche" (political colonies). Again, by the kindness of the president, I am enabled to send this paper in print; while, as to the discussion it evoked, Prof. Guido Bigoni, of the Royal Lyceum of Genoa, may be said to have borne the chief part, calling particular attention to the Italian littoral on the Red Sea and in Somaliland, as yet awaiting profounder and more extended studies.

The first and second sections were then combined to hear a lecture by Commander Cattolica on "The Methods followed by the Hydrographic Office of the Naval Department in the Design and Reproduction of Charts." An official report of this able study will appear in the *Atti* of the Congress, shortly to appear.

At 9 P.M. of the same day (13th) the Aula Magna of the Istituto di Studi Superiori was crowded in every part to hear Signor Weitzacker discourse on "Basutoland and its Inhabitants." Introduced by a glowing eulogy from the president, Prof. Marinelli, the lecturer gave vivid illustration of the characteristics, ethnographic, linguistic, historical, and geographical, of that region of Southern Africa, and dwelt instructively on the progress made by its inhabitants through civilising contact with Great Britain. That people, which seventy years ago was cannibal, now sent its children to school, where they learned with such avidity and intelligence that they might (said Signor Weitzacker) compete at no disadvantage with their contemporaries of European origin—and, indeed, before the British examiners, acquitted themselves most creditably. Herd boys, after stalling their cattle, attend night-schools, often riding to them on oxen a journey of two or three hours when the moonlight admits of it. Among the Basutos are missionaries who co-operate effectively with their European brethren; acquiring, for professional purposes and special application, the exact sciences, and translating into their vernacular some of the most instructive and attractive products of European literature. Signor Weitzacker concluded his brilliant narrative of experiences, which will soon be made *publici juris*, with a fervent hope that not with exterminating wars but with science, with civilisation, with all the redeeming and regenerating influences of "the younger day," the disinherited ones of the earth, the laggards in the march of progress, will, like the Basutos, reinforce ere long the ranks of an expanding and ascending humanity.

The following day (14th) was chiefly notable for the sitting of the Economic and Commercial Sections, in which Prof. E. Millosevich discoursed on the "Supreme Necessity of Completing the Determination of the Area of the Italian Kingdom." His paper I am also sending to the Society as revised by himself for the printer; but its contents and the animated discussion it caused (in which the military delegates chiefly distinguished themselves) I cannot enter into, any more than into the cognate subject introduced by Prof. Dalla Volta on the "General Census of the Kingdom and its Execution." The two themes were of exclusive and, at the same time, of urgent, Italian interest—a fact which explained the restriction of the attendance mainly to delegates from the various cities and seats of learning in the home country.

In the afternoon, favoured by weather worthy of the best traditions of the Tuscan *primavera* (spring), an excursion was made to Fiesole, where the admirably excavated Roman Theatre, the Roman Baths, the Cyclopean Walls, and the Etruscan Museum, competed with the noble panorama for the admiration and delight of the delegates. After Fiesole the *Congressisti* in nearly their full force (300) took the mediæval stronghold of Vincigliata on their way home, and enjoyed an instructive object-lesson, due to the learning and liberality of Mr. Temple Leader, in the fortified abode of a mediæval *Condottiere*—the part played by its original owner, Sir John Hawkwood, the well-known English free-lance in the pay of the Tuscan Republic.

The 15th was signalled in the Economico-Commercial Section by Signor Angiolo Cossu, an able young Sardinian geographer, who read a paper on the "Distribution of the Population of Sardinia according to the Geological Constitution of the Soil." He showed how the depopulation of the island must in great part be attributed to the insalubrity of the land along its littoral. Remarking that while the mean density of the population of the island is 28 inhabitants to the square kilometer, he said that it rises, in an internal zone of Miocenic character, to 102 per square kilometer, thus attaining a density equal to the most populous regions of Italy, like Lombardy and Campania. This phenomenon he admitted must be chiefly ascribed to the better agricultural qualities of the Miocene, while the more recent soils which surround it, and which are so sparsely populated, are of much inferior quality. But he also traced such an enormous difference to the natural unhealthiness of the later soils, and to the flight of the inhabitants during past centuries into the interior of the island to escape the pirates whose incursions devastated the littoral and caused its abandonment. Signor Cossu's paper was followed by a very attractive one (at least for the Italian delegates), on "Italy as an Ethnic and Economic Factor in the Development of South America." Fourteen years' life in the Argentine Republic had enabled the author (Signor Godio) to estimate the progress made on the Plata by the Italian element, and how much greater that progress would be if the emigrants were duly backed up by their Government, and if not only labour but also capital were sent out to reinforce the national energies in Argentina. A practical issue from this warmly applauded paper was the carrying of resolutions in favour of the better teaching of South American geography in Italian schools, and also of the bestowal of greater attention on the Spanish language—the chief medium of communication in those latitudes. A third resolution in behalf of lightening fiscal burdens, so as to admit of the freer flow of Italy's capital towards those regions, was also approved, but with modifications proposed by the president of the section. Of cognate (and also of purely Italian) interest was the advocate Careri's memoir on "Geography as a Factor in the Legislative Function of the State," in which he dwelt on the disillusion of Italy, who had hoped that after the cutting of the Suez Canal her mercantile prestige would return to her, forgetting, as she did, her deficiency in capital, which makes her mercantile marine give way in all directions to foreign competition, and by damaging her merchant service deprives her navy of a healthy recruiting ground.

In the evening (15th) Dr. Lamberto Loria, in the Aula Magna, delivered a lecture on the War of Logra (New Guinea), illustrated with numerous photographs representing indigenous types, with costumes and warlike appurtenances. As it would be impossible to do justice to this brilliant exposition in my report, I shall confine myself to certain interesting details of Loria himself and his various expeditions in the Malay Archipelago, reserving an account of his lecture for a future number.

Dr. Lamberto Loria is a Tuscan by birth, and distinguished himself in mathematics at the University of Pisa, where his splendid physique, his versatile abilities, his ardent temperament, and, I should add, his ample fortune, made him a leader among his fellow-students. Some years ago, when the Anarchist conspiracy in Tuscany caused the Government such anxiety, Loria headed a university *comitato* to co-operate in its suppression, and his action received special commendation in Parliament. Master of his time and movements, he turned his attention to geographical exploration, and in the June of 1889 embarked on a Dutch vessel at Batavia (Java), and after a tedious voyage landed at Port Moresby, the seat of the British Government in New Guinea. From this, as his headquarters, he made

frequent excursions into the heart of the island, visiting tracts previously unexplored, and crossing occasionally to Australia to recruit his health, which suffered not a little from the fatigues and privations he endured. He visited nearly every British possession in Malayan waters, with a view to completing his collection of zoological, ethnographical, and anthropological types—his last and most important expedition in New Guinea being organised (like its predecessors) at his own expense, without any assistance from the Italian or British Government but their moral support. The island being destitute of mammals (except marsupials), no means of transport was possible but porters, and the baggage had to be conveyed on the shoulders of natives. This caravan consisted (besides himself and his immediate retainers) of a European *preparatore* (expert in scientific preparations, anatomical, zoological, and botanical) and of 200 porters of both sexes, as to whom Dr. Loria found that the heaviest and severest work was best discharged by the females. To visit the various islands, particularly those grouped at the eastern point of New Guinea, he purchased a merchant ship, and equipped it with crew and provisions for several years. During a long sojourn among cannibals he had never occasion to kill one of them, though often in danger of his own life—dangers incurred by his frequently intercepting expeditions made inland by those man-eaters with a view to capturing prisoners and devouring them. His moral force rendered physical interference unnecessary in the prevention of those gruesome campaigns, the after-scenes of which had filled him with horror. A more than usually successful take of prisoners would (he had witnessed) be followed by a most brutal *festa*, in which the cannibals tore their human victims out of each others' hands, wrenching off limbs, upper and lower, in the struggle, and devouring them—the said victims having been previously tortured and cooked alive in anticipation of the infernal meal. Many, and most instructive, are the collections sent or brought home from the Malayan Archipelago by Dr. Loria—the zoological being deposited at the Museo Civico of Genoa, numbering some fifty new species, and having already furnished the theme of twenty-five monographs by as many scientific experts. The ethnographical specimens are accommodated at the Kircherian Museum in Rome. These are so numerous that they fill several spacious halls of the Museum, and await Dr. Loria's more intimate study and classification. His anthropological collection includes above 500 crania, which are also on view in Rome, in the Museo Nazionale di Antropologia. Other important treasures are his *berracine* (mosses), now in the hands of Dr. Levier, who has come upon eighty per cent. of new species among them.

In the Scientific Section (15th) Professor Marinelli explained the work of the International Commission for the Study of Glaciers, and also that of the National (Italian) Commission. Other communications of a more or less technical character were made in this section—such as that of Dr. Halbfass on "The Morphometric Study of Lake Orta"; that of Dr. Baldacci on "The Geographical Botany of Albania"; and those of Colonel Moni, Professor De Stefani, and Professor O. Marinelli on "Movements of the Soil."

A lecture at 4 p.m., in the Aula Magna, by Professor Ghisleri, on "The Teaching of Geography in the United States of America," attracted a numerous audience. Profoundly interesting and instructive to Italians, it amounted to a eulogy of America's keen and comprehensive appreciation of the value of geographical study, as shown in many schools visited by Professor Ghisleri at the time of the Chicago Exhibition. The contagion of such an example, he concluded, would prove life-giving to Italy, whose genius for geographical research, long slumbering, was now fully revived.

Motus in fine velocior! I must close my summary (necessarily incomplete) by

a few rapid side-glances at features of the Congress, important in themselves, and capable of rewarding more intimate study in the official report of the proceedings now preparing for distribution to the delegates.

First to claim notice was the *Mostra Geografica* (Geographical Exhibition), held in the Lung' Arno Acciaioli, on the premises of the well-known antiquarian book-seller, the Cavaliere Leo S. Olschki. Among its treasures was the *Mundus Novus* of Amerigo Vespucci (1504, in quarto). The same most interesting work was on view in a German translation by Jobsten Ruchamer, printed at Nuremberg in 1508. In addition to many other books of unique value might be noted the *stupende edizioni* of Ptolemy, from the precious Roman edition of 1490 to the Paduan of 1621. Leaving these and many suchlike temptations to the Jonathan Oldbucks of the Congress, we pass to the *Mostre Cartografiche*, filling eight halls of the Royal Archivio di Stato at the corner of the Via Ninna, and attracting us with the *Planisfero del Secolo XIV.*; the maps of the Azores by Trixeira (1587); the *Carte Nautiche dell' America del Damel* (17th century); the map of the North Pole (17th century); and also the Indian charts of the same epoch. Documents of extreme historical value, relating to Amerigo Vespucci; an autograph letter of Toscanelli on the comet of 1453; and the precious edition ("the only complete copy extant") of the *Grands et Petits Voyages de De Bry*, lead on to a very rich collection of plans of mediæval Italian towns, most serviceable to the historian—all bringing back the Italy of the pre- and post-Renaissance with a vividness almost painfully impressive. This wealth of literary and cartographic works is at its best when illustrating the Vespucci and Toscanelli epoch, in view (naturally enough) of the celebration of the fourth centenary of these geographical pioneers which opens to-morrow.

To-night (April 17th) a banquet will be held at the "Gambrinus-Halle," at which the President, Professor Marinelli, and the heads of the sections are expected to speak; while a cordial despatch will be sent to the Syndic of Milan announcing that the fourth Italian Geographical Congress, in 1901, will be held in the Lombard capital.

J. P. STEELE, B.A., M.D. (Edin.),

Delegate of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROYAL SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

LECTURES DELIVERED IN APRIL.

Mr. William Ogilvie, Dominion Astronomer and Land Surveyor, lectured in Edinburgh, on April 5th, on "The Geography and Resources of the Klondike Region." Professor Prothero presided.

On April 29th, Professor Geddes gave an address to the Society, in Edinburgh, on Cyprus. Dr. John Kerr took the chair.

LECTURES IN MAY.

Two Lectures will be given in Edinburgh during the month. Mr. De Windt will give an address entitled "Through the Gold-fields of Alaska to Bering Straits" on May 17th; and on the 26th Major Stanley Paterson will, it is hoped, describe his recent journey in the basin of the Upper Orinoco.