

existence. Some thirty colleges made up this great university, and through the Middle Ages it exercised a great influence not only on literature and religion but on politics also. The scholarly Abelard taught for a time at Paris, as did also the great mediaeval theologian St. Thomas Aquinas, and many others hardly less famous. The great humanist Erasmus was a student there, but never had a word to say for its teaching. As a matter of fact, like many another European university, Paris did not appreciate the full significance of the Renaissance. The new learning and the newer methods were not welcomed in her university halls and she gradually fell behind the times. The fierce religious wars in France in the sixteenth century aided in her degeneration, and at the accession of Henry IV., in 1589, the fortunes of the university had reached their lowest ebb. Henry, with the assistance of his able minister Sully, sought to rehabilitate the moribund institution and was for a time successful. Under Louis XIV., however, a relapse occurred. The Sorbonne, or school of theology, alone showed vitality and progressiveness and gradually usurped many of the functions of the larger body. Being a conservative institution the university incurred the animosity of the French republicans, and in 1793 was suppressed by the Revolutionary party then in power. They did away with the four great faculties of law, theology, medicine, and letters, and for over a century there was no university, with a title as such, at Paris.

After it had ceased to exist as an independent institution the university, under the name of the Sorbonne, became one of the academies of the great University of France, established by Napoleon I. It was not until 1896 that the University of Paris, along with other institutions, regained an independent existence and title. Now, however, the various faculties and schools are reunited under the control of the council of the university and give instruction in Pro-