

I T A L Y .¹

I N T R O D U C T I O N .

ITALY is progressing rapidly in State education : and the official statistics, published in 1884, are surprising, as even the few following figures² show :—

—	1871.	1883.
Educational vote	16,300,000 frcs.	30,400,000 frcs.
—	1861.	1881.
Schools	21,353	42,510
Pupils	1,008,674.	1,928,700.

Statistical
returns.

But State education in Italy is not, as yet, in that matured condition³ which warrants looking to it for profitable example.⁴ Its present organisation is too recent;⁵ the change too sudden;⁶ the antagonistic forces at work too powerful.⁷ For these reasons I only availed myself of private letters that I held to certain high dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church, to learn whether they were satisfied with the present State system ; and, if not, what, if any, amendments would make it welcome to them.

M A I N F E A T U R E S .

The stage which national education has reached is that primary instruction⁸ is—

- (a) Gratuitous,⁹
- (b) (Nominally) compulsory,¹⁰ and
- (c) (Perhaps) religious.¹¹

Gratuitous,
compulsory,
and religious
features.

That is to say (nominally) compulsory at State schools from the age of six for a period of five years (unless the authorities are satisfied with the education received elsewhere), so far as the condition of the country allows : for, owing to the sparsity of population in some districts,¹² schools are not yet available for all.

Its religious feature consists in the lay head-masters conducting once a week, on Saturday, a religious exercise¹³ in the great majority of schools ; although there are some exceptions where this is entirely left out of the programme.¹⁴ But even religious instruction is only given to those children whose parents express a wish for it :¹⁵ and all the children may be exempt from it by going to school one hour later than ordinarily.¹⁶ Nor does

Religious
feature.

¹ For "Education in Spain," see "Journal of Ed.," 1 Aug., 1886, p. 315.

² Compare with "L'Instruction Publique en Italie," par C. Hippéau. Didier et Cie., Paris, 1875 (hereafter termed "Hipp."); figures 1873-74, pp. 126-131. See also Report of Amer. Commr. on Educat. for 1882-83, p. 230, and 1883-84, p. 227.

³ Note, for instance, uneducated factory children ;

(a) "R. C.," vol. 1, pp. 389, 390 ;

(b) I. E. C., vol. 13, p. 195 ; and

(c) Amer. Commr. Rep. for 1882-83, p. 233.

⁴ Except in respect of deaf-mute institutions, see Special Report herewith.

⁵ See also—

(a) "Deux Mois de Mission en Italie," par F. Pecaut. Hachette, Paris, 1880 (hereafter termed "Pec."), p. 201 ;

(b) Hipp., pp. 41, 43, and 126.

⁶ See also Pec., p. 87.

⁷ See also Pec., pp. 111-112.

⁸ For full details, see Hipp.

⁹ See also Hipp., pp. 38, 64, and *seq.*, and 81.

¹⁰ See also—

(a) R. C., vol. 1, pp. 27 and 385-390, and *espec.* 390 ;

(b) Hipp., p. 73 and *seq.* ;

(c) "School-life in the Apennines," "Journal of Ed.,"

1 Oct., 1886, p. 414 ; and

(d) Amer. Commr. Rep. on Education, 1885, for 1883-84,

p. 227.

¹¹ Note law of 15 July, 1877, and also that of 1859. Pec.,

pp. 88 and 104.

¹² Every commune of 4,000 must have a primary school.

¹³ See also Pec., pp. 88 and 106 ; and for effects, pp.

114-118.

¹⁴ At Bologna, for instance, and Florence ; but in the latter

case note special provision. See Pec., pp. 105 and 246.

¹⁵ See (a) Pec., pp. 96 and 98 ; and

(b) Hipp., pp. 59-63, 88 and 96.

¹⁶ See Pec., p. 88. It is said, however, to be very rare that families refuse religious instruction ; nearly everywhere Jews, with a few Protestants, are the only ones to absent themselves. See Pec., pp. 96 and 108.