MISCELLANEOUS.

PICO DI MIRANDOLA.

Our frontispiece is a portrait of one of the most ingenious mystics of the Italian Renaissance. Giovanni Pico, Count of Mirandola (born February 24, 1463, and died November 17, 1494) was a prominent young Italian nobleman of fine figure and beautiful face, highly educated not only in Greek and Latin, but also in Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldean. Having studied two years in Bologna when only fourteen or fifteen years old, he began his Wanderjahre which lasted seven years, visiting the learned schools of Italy and France. His philosophy may be characterized as Platonism reconciled with the doctrines of Aristotle; but his dominant interest was centered in mysticism, and he was the first to maintain that the truth of the Christian doctrines could be proved through the Cabala. Though he was a good Christian his enemies threw the suspicion of heresy upon him, and his first little book of nine hundred theses was prohibited by papal authority. But after the publication of an elaborate Apologia Pope Alexander VI declared him vindicated in a document dated June 18, 1493. In his twenty-eighth year he wrote the Heptaplus and at this time suddenly changed his habits of life. Having formerly been a favorite with women, he now burned all his love poems and became an ascetic. He renounced his share in the principality of Mirandola, gave richly to the poor and devoted most of his time to religious meditation. When he would have finished his literary labors he intended to give away all his property and wander as a bare-footed friar from town to town proclaiming salvation through Christ. But before he could carry out this plan he died of a fever at Florence in his thirty-first year. So far as is known he was the first to coin the word “macrocosm” denoting the whole of the world described so beautifully in the first scene of Goethe’s “Faust,” where Faust revels in the contemplation of its sign, saying:

"Ha, welche Wonne fließt in diesem Blick....
   Wie alles sich zum ganzen webt,
   Eins in dem andern wirkt und lebt!"

Bayard Taylor in his Notes makes the following interesting comment on this monologue of Faust when he beholds the sign of the macrocosm:

"The term 'macrocosm' was used by Pico di Mirandola, Paracelsus, and other mystical writers, to denote the universe. They imagined a mysterious correspondence between the macrocosm (the world in large) and the microcosm (the world in little), or man; and most of the astrological theories were based on the influence of the former upon the latter. From some of Goethe's notes, still in existence, we learn that during the time when the conception
of Faust first occupied his mind (1770-73), he read Welling's Opus Mago-Cabbalisticum, Paracelsus, Valentinus, the Auroca Catena Homeri, and even the Latin poet Manilius.

"Mr. Blackie, in his Notes, quotes a description of the macrocosm from a Latin work of Robert Fludd, published at Oppenheim in 1619; but the theory had already been given in the Heptaplas of Pico di Mirandola (about 1490). The universe, according to him, consists of three worlds, the earthly, the heavenly, and the super-heavenly. The first includes our planet and its enveloping space, as far as the orbit of the moon; the second, the sun and stars; the third, the governing divine influences. The same phenomena belong to each, but have different grades of manifestation. Thus the physical element of fire exists in the earthly sphere, the warmth of the sun in the heavenly, and a seraphic, spiritual fire in the empyrean; the first burns, the second quickens, the third loves. 'In addition to these three worlds (the macrocosm),' says Pico, 'there is a fourth (the microcosm), containing all embraced within them. This is man, in whom are included a body formed of the elements, a heavenly spirit, reason, an angelic soul, and a resemblance to God.'

"The work of Cornelius Agrippa, De Occulta Philosophia, which was also known to Goethe, contains many references to these three divisions of the macrocosm, and their reciprocal influences. The latter are described in the passage commencing: 'How each the Whole its substance gives!'

"Hayward quotes, as explanatory of these lines, the following sentence from Herder's Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit: 'When, therefore, I open the great book of Heaven, and see before me this measureless palace, which alone, and everywhere, the Godhead only has power to fill, I conclude, as undistractedly as I can, from the whole to the particular, and from the particular to the whole.'

"The four lines which Faust apparently quotes ('What says the sage, now first I recognize') are not from Nostradamus. They may possibly have been suggested by something in Jacob Boehme's first work, 'Aurora, or the Rising Dawn,' but it is not at all necessary that they should be an actual quotation."

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO.

The Art Institute of Chicago has recently been extended and several galleries have been added. The center is now a very artistic and monumental stairway. The empty walls are still waiting for fresco decorations. The proper subject would be the representation of the Religious Parliament which met in this very building nineteen years ago. Through this unique event in the development of religion the Art Institute of Chicago has become historical; and no better, no nobler, nor more appropriate subject could be chosen as a mural decoration for this handsome stairway hall.

DR. PAUL TOPINARD.—OBITUARY NOTE.

We learn with deep regret that Dr. Paul Topinard died at his residence in Paris on December 20, 1911, at the age of eighty-one. He was a scholar of considerable prominence, and his ideas as set forth for instance in his Science and Faith (Chicago, Open Court Publishing Co., 1899) are worthy