oratorio—*Des Heilands letzte Stunden,* known in England as *Calvary* or *The Crucifixion—*which was performed at Cassel on Good Friday 1835, and sung in English at the Norwich festival of 1839, under Spohr’s own direction, with such unexampled success that he was accustomed to speak of this event as the greatest triumph of his life. For the Norwich festival of 1842 he composed *The Fall of Babylon,* which also was a perfect success. His last opera, *Die Kreuzfahrer,* was produced at Cassel in 1845. Of his nine symphonies the finest, *Die Weihe der Tone,* was produced in 1832. His compositions for the violin include concertos, quartetts, duets, and other concerted pieces and solos, adapted for the chamber and the concert room, and among these a high place is taken by four double quartetts,—a form of composition of which he was both the inventor and the perfecter. He was, indeed, very much inclined to explore new paths, notwithstanding his attachment to classical form, and his freedom from prejudice was proved by the care with which he produced Wagner’s *Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser* at Cassel in 1842 and 1853, in spite of the elector’s opposition. Spohr retained his appointment until 1857, when, very much against his wish, he was pensioned off. In the same year he broke his arm, but he was able to conduct *Jessonda* at Prague in 1858. This, however, was his last effort. He died at Cassel on 16th October 1859. (w. s. r.)

SPOLETO (Lat. *Spoletium),* a city of Italy, in Umbria, placed in a commanding position near the Via Flaminia, between Rome and Perugia, is said to have been colonized in 240 b.c. (Liv., *Epit., xx. ;* Vell. Pat., i. 14), and is called by Cicero *(Pro Balb.,* 21) “colonia Latina in primis firma et illustris.” After the battle of Trasimenus (217 b.c.) Spoletium was attacked by Hannibal, who was repulsed by the inhabitants (Liv., xxii. 9). During the Second Punic War the city was a useful ally to Rome. It suffered greatly during the civil wars of Marius and Sulla. The latter, after his victory over Crassus, confiscated the terri­tory of Spoletium and reduced it to the rank of a military colony. Under the empire it again became a flourishing town (Strabo, v. p. 227; Plin., *H.N.,* iii. 14; Ptol., iii.

1, 54). Owing to its elevated position it was an important stronghold during the Vandal and Gothic wars ; its walls were dismantled by Totila (Procop., *Bell. Get.,* iii. 12). Under the Lombards Spoleto became the capital of an independent duchy (from *c.* 570), and its dukes ruled a considerable part of central Italy. Together with other fiefs, it was bequeathed to Pope Gregory VII. by the empress Matilda, but for some time struggled to maintain its inde­pendence. In 1881 it had a population of 7969 (commune, 21,507), many of whom are occupied in the weaving of woollen stuffs. It is the seat of an archbishopric for the three dioceses of Spoleto, Bevagna, and Trevi.

The city contains many interesting ancient remains,—traces of an early polygonal wall, a Roman theatre, and parts of three temples, built into the churches of S. Agostino, S. Andrea, and S. Giuliano. Remains of a fine Roman bridge were found a few years ago buried in the former bed of a torrent, which now runs along a different line. These remains have recently been buried again under a newly made road. On the citadel, which commands the town, still stands an ancient castle, originally built by Theodoric. This castle was mostly destroyed by the Goths, but was afterwards re­built and enlarged at many different times, especially by Pope Nicholas V. The existing building contains work of many different dates. The cathedral of S. Maria Assunta dates partly from the time of the Lombard duchy, but was much modernized in 1644. Over the main entrance is a very interesting and large mosaic of Christ in Majesty signed “Salsernus,” 1207 ; at the sides are figures of the Virgin and St John. In the choir and on the half cupola of the apse are some of the finest frescos of Lippo Lippi, represent­ing scenes from the life of the Virgin. Lippo died in 1469, leaving part of the work to be completed by his assistant Fra Diamante. The fine stalls and panelling in the choir are attributed to Bramante. The church of S. Pietro is a fine early example of Lombard archi­tecture, though much modernized. The façade is remarkable for its rich sculptured decorations of grotesque figures, dragons, and foliage. S. Domenico is a fine example of later Italian Gothic with bands of different coloured stones. The three-apsed crypt of the church of S. Gregorio is of great interest ; it probably dates from the found­ing of the church in the 9th century. S. Niccolo is a beautiful example of Pointed Gothic.

The city is still supplied with water by a grand aqueduct (see vol. ii. pl. IV.) across the adjacent gorge ; it has stone piers and brick arches, and is about 268 feet high and 676 feet long. It is said to have been built in 604 by Theodelapius, the third Lombard duke, and the stone piers belong probably to that time. The brick arches are later restorations.

SPONGES. The great advance which has been made during the past fifteen years in our knowledge of the sponges is due partly to the vivifying influence of the evolutional hypothesis, but still more to the opportunities afforded by novel methods of technique. To the strength and weak­ness of the deductive method Haeckel’s work on the *Kalk­schwämme* (*6)@@*1 is a standing testimony, while the slow but sure progress which accompanies the scientific method is equally illustrated by the works of Schulze *(fio),* who by a, masterly application of the new processes has more than any one else reconstructed on a sure basis the general morphology of the sponges. In the general progress the fossil sponges have been involved, and the application of Nicol’s method of studying fossil organisms in thin slices has led, in the hands of Zittel and others (*24, 35*), to a complete overthrow of those older classifications which relegated every obscure petrifaction to the fossil sponges and consigned them all to orders no longer existing. But, whilst many problems have been solved, still more have been suggested. An almost endless diversity in details differentiates the sponges into a vast number of specific forms; the exclusive possession in common of a few simple characters closely unites them into a compact group, sharply marked off from the rest of the animal kingdom.

@@@1 These numbers refer to the bibliography at the end of the article.

*Structure and Form.*

*Description of a Simple Sponge.—*As an example of one of the simplest known sponges we select *Ascetta primordialis* (fig. 1), Haeckel.

This is a hollow vase-like sac closed at the lower end, by which it is attached, opening above by a comparatively large aperture, the *osculum* or vent, and at the sides by numerous smaller apertures or *pores,* which perforate the walls. Ex­cept for the absence of tentacles and the presence of pores it offers a general resemblance to some simple form of *Hydrozoon.* Histologically, however, it presents considerable differences, since, in addition to an endoderm and an ecto­derm, a third or mesodermic layer con­tributes to the structure of the walls ; and the endoderm consists of cells (see fig. 21*g*) each of which resembles in all essential features those complicated uni­cellular organisms known as choano- flagellate *Infusoria* (see Protozoa, vol. xix. p. 858). With this positive charac­ter is associated a negative one : nemato- cysts are entirely absent. The activity