

F R A N C E .¹

INTRODUCTION.

THE present State system², as revised by the laws of the 16th June, 1881,^{1,2,3} and 28th March, 1882,³ should be a peculiarly interesting study in New Zealand,⁴ as being the most absolute one existing, of gratuitous, secular, and compulsory education. And the enactments just mentioned, which entirely changed the main features of primary education in France,⁵ were passed by reason of the views prevailing there that "in France, the preliminary condition of all progress was the secularization of education;"^{6,3} and that the laws in question "would enable France to resume the march onward which was begun by the Revolution of 1789."³

The great education question which has been agitated in France for some years past has been whether the priesthood, or the great bulk of the people, shall have the dominating influence over popular education. The people have prevailed: and accordingly education in all the national educational establishments is exclusively secular.⁵ And by the law passed this year (1886) "in public schools of every description all instruction is to be given exclusively by laymen."⁷

Whether this will eventually be profitable has yet to be proved; inasmuch as the legislation is too recent to enable the system to be deemed yet other than as an experiment in France.⁸ But meantime the friction is obviously great; and hostile influences bitter and powerful.⁹

Religious instruction must not now be given in school-houses;¹⁰ and the issue has been

¹ For origin of primary State education in France, and its organisation under Napoleon I., see Sir P. J. Keenan's address, p. 48, as quoted on p. 7, note 2, *supra*.

² See Lois et Règlements en vigueur, enseignement primaire supérieur (hereafter termed L. and R.), containing report dated 29th Oct., 1881, by President of Council to President of Republic; and letter of 6th Nov., 1881, to Prefect; and also—

(a) Mr. M. Arnold's (May, 1886) report on (1) free education, (2) quality of education, (3) status, training, and pensioning of teachers, and (4) compulsory attendance and release from school; and

(b) His evidence before the Royal Education Commission, 1886 (hereafter termed R.E.C.), pp. 186-225;

(c) "French Examiners under the Civil Service," Blackwood's Edin. Mag., June, 1886, Art. by H. E. H. Jennings, p. 739; and

(d) Amer. Commr. Rep., 1885, for 1883-84, pp. ccii.-ccix.

³ See (a) Remarks of M. Buisson, Inspector-General and Director of Primary Education (hereafter termed M. Buisson), I.E.C., vol. 13, p. 215; and note also

(b) Arts. in "Nineteenth Century Review" (hereafter termed N.C.), Oct., 1882, by the Abbé Martin on "The French Education System" (hereafter termed "Abbé M."), p. 533; and by the late M. About, "Clerical Education in France," Sept., 1879 (hereafter termed M. About), pp. 447-460;

(c) R.E.C., Mr. M. Arnold, 5500 and *seq.*; and

(d) London *Globe*, 4 Mar., 1884 (hereafter termed *Globe*).

"The subject of primary education has been again under discussion in France. The principle of complete secularization was upheld in the Senate." The new law destroys even the last hold of the clergy. For details see "Journal of Ed.," Oct. 1, 1886, "Illustrated London News," 22 March, 1886, and "Sunday at Home," April, 1886. It has also been recently decided that the Hospital of the Enfants Trouvés in Paris, which has ever since its foundation been served by Sisters, who lived within its walls, is to be laicised. At the meeting of the National Educational Assoc. of France, held at Tours, April 15-18, 1884, it was agreed "that in a republic the future citizen should be taught a knowledge of his rights, a sense of his duty, and a sentiment of his responsibility." Amer. Commr. Report, 1885, for 1883-84, p. ccix. See also R.E.C., Mr. M. Arnold, 5500. "The Senate on 20th March, 1886, agreed, by 168 votes to 93, to preclude monks and nuns from teaching in municipal schools," *P.M. Budget*, 26 March, 1886, p. 32.

⁴ See N.Z. 1877 Act, s. 84, s.s. 6, and 2, 3, and secs. 89-96, but note option in s. 95. See also 1885 Act, secs. 6-8.

⁵ For previous law see, for instance—

(a) British Embassy report on Technical and Primary Education, 17 Dec., 1867 (hereafter termed B.E. rep.), pp. 170-174;

(b) "Popular Education of France," &c., 1861, by M. Arnold;

(c) R.C. 1st rep. and vol. 1;

(d) L. and R., espec. report and letter as above.

⁶ See (a) Circular dated 17 Nov., 1883, addressed by Minister to teachers (hereafter termed Circular);

(b) Règlement d'organisation pédagogique pour les écoles primaires publiques (hereafter termed règ. d'org. péd.), p. 45, 27 juillet, 1882, &c. (See reference to this, R.E.C., Mr. M. Arnold, 6152);

(c) M. Buisson. Abbé M., M. About, and *Globe*, &c., and compare N.Z. 1877 Act, s. 84, s.s. 2, 3 and

(d) Reference to system in "N.C.," Jan., 1886, Art. on "Irish Education," by Viscount Powerscourt, p. 130. But observe results of Victorian secular system, "Aust. Times and Anglo-N.Z.," 26 Feb., 1886, p. 26.

⁷ See "Journal of Ed.," 1 Oct., 1886, p. 415.

⁸ In other words it has to be proved whether the French proverb "A barbe de fou on apprend à raire" is applicable in this case.

⁹ See also R.E.C., Mr. M. Arnold, 5989 and *seq.*, and 5375.

¹⁰ But "morale" is taught. Note R.E.C., Mr. M. Arnold, espec. 5709 and *seq.*, 5795 and *seq.*, 6153 and *seq.*, and 6095, "The Paris schools are provided by the municipality, and the municipality object to bringing in the name of God, and so it is not introduced in Paris." An anecdote by Mr. Arnold in his recent report (May, 1886, p. 19), apart from its moral, is so charmingly told and so striking an instance that "dans l'art d'intéresser consiste l'art d'écrire," that it should be itself read. But the pith of it is—a child, asked "to whom do you owe all that you are enjoying here, this fine schoolroom, these pictures, these books, this splendid city, all that gives security, comfort, and pleasure to your life, who gives it all to you?" replied "Eh bien, c'est le pays."

"We marvel at the immorality, the scepticism, and the depravation of modern times. Enter any college you may meet; stir up that apparent youth; call to the surface what lies at the bottom; analyse that mud; you will no longer be surprised. The well has long been poisoned, and he who has not been a child never becomes a man," Dumas the younger, in *L'Affaire Clemenceau*. See also eloquent address of M. Renan, whilst presiding on 15 May, 1886, at annual banquet of the Assoc. Générale des Etudiants de Paris, *P.M. Budget*, 20 May, 1886.