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It seems, in conclusion, by no means improbable that a solution of this kind will be reached far more speedily in the United States than in England. Let me quote a very remarkable proposal on the lines of this paper, made in a recently-published paper called "The Historic Episcopate," by the Rev. Dr. Shields. He says, "Already they" (*i.e.*, the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians) "have points of contact and agreement in three of the Lambeth Articles: in the Scriptures, the Creeds and the Sacraments. It only remains to attach them in the Episcopate. And that attachment might be begun by concurrent ordinations on the principle advocated by a learned and accomplished Bishop of St. Andrews (the late Dr. Charles Wordsworth) for the reconciliation of Presbyterians and Episcopalians in the Church of Scotland. In such ordinations candidates would be presented to the Bishop, with the concurrence of the Presbytery, by priests who have had formerly Presbyterian ordination, or perhaps by Presbyterian ministers who have had formerly Episcopal ordination. The transaction might be kept within the rubric as well as the book, or at least within the Lambeth proposals, and would involve a practical sanction of all conceivable interests and claims, with no possibility of doubt or controversy. Both parties would have acted upon their respective theories of the Christian ministry, without conceding anything to each other and without reflecting upon one another. The most extreme Episcopalian, from his point of view, would have fully legitimated a ministry which on other grounds he was prepared to appreciate and welcome; and the most extreme Presbyterian, from his point of view, would only have gained enlarged authority for a ministry which he believed to be already valid and regular."

FREDERIC RELTON.

ART. IV.—NOTES ON THE ASPECTS OF RELIGION AND OF EDUCATION IN FRANCE.

OF all foreign nations France is the one in which we are naturally most interested. The French people have been for ages, and are still, our competitors and rivals in Europe and the world. Their history has been throughout its long course closely interwoven with our own, and we have mutually influenced one another in more ways than can be counted. With the exception of the United States, no country carries on a larger trade with us; and it is estimated that one-fifth of its entire foreign commerce is transacted with the United King-

dom. Add to this the unceasing intercourse that takes place across the Channel; the vast numbers of British residing on French soil, and the perhaps equally numerous colonies of French domiciled in London and other large cities; the interchange of all sorts of publications, from the historical and the scientific treatise down to the light novel or theatrical play; the mutual alterations in fashions and dress, English women borrowing their finery from Paris, and French dandies the cut of their clothes from London—consider, I say, all these points, and you will recognise how closely we are knitted to what I may call our Gallic kinsmen across the Straits. And yet we differ from one another in a hundred ways—so much so, indeed, that we rarely, or with difficulty, understand one another, our manners, customs, ideas, modes of expression, and views—or rather the points of view from which we regard things—being frequently irreconcilable. We live as strangers in each other's countries, and, although inter-marriages are not rare, retain our distinctive characteristics without alloy. The French express this by the phrase "différence de mœurs," but perhaps "difference of racial instincts" would be more accurate. In one respect we are quite alike: in the love of, and pride in, each our own nationality; but this only, of course, widens the natural and historical breach which separates us.

It will be my endeavour in this paper to draw a comparison or contrast between the French and ourselves in respect of two important matters, religion and education; for it is deep down in the foundations of these that we can trace some of the causes of the difference already alluded to, others being assignable perhaps to climate and historical associations.

The sources of my information are threefold: first, personal observation over a great part of the North of France; second, knowledge gathered from a variety of trustworthy persons; and, third, reliable statistics gathered from documents published by the Government.

The history of primary education in France is soon told. Down to the time of the Revolution there can hardly be said to have been any schools for the common people at all—in the villages, at least. Some of the clergy held classes in their houses, or in the aisles of their churches, and occasionally a teacher would set up a school in a cottage or barn, in dependence upon what the parents of his scholars might choose to supply him with in food and lodging. The stock of books consisted, says Mr. Franque, who edited the Government Report of 1842, of a Psalter in Latin; a "Croix de Dieu," or "Abécédaire"; a "Civilité pure et honnête"; and a multiplication table. "Some old parchment, hereditary in the family, perhaps a contract drawn up by a notary public, served," he

adds, "to finish the scholar's course; for when he had got this length, 'il savait lire dans les contrats,' and was accounted a 'savant.'"

In those days instruction of the common people was not only little thought of in any country, except Scotland, it was by most persons considered unsuitable for the class whom Providence had destined to be, and to remain, labourers. Voltaire wrote: "It seems necessary that there should be ignorant ragamuffins (*gueux*). If you possessed land like me, you would be of my opinion. It is not the country labourer you ought to teach, but the burgher (*le bourgeois*), the dweller in the towns."

It was the clergy who first gave an impulse to primary schools in France, as was the case also in Great Britain, the Scotch having the start, however, of the English by two centuries at least. The Bull of Pope Benedict XIII., who founded the Société de frères des écoles Chrétiennes, in 1724, contains these remarkable words: "The object of this society is to prevent the innumerable disorders and inconveniences produced by ignorance, the source of all evils, among those especially who, overwhelmed with poverty, and obliged to earn their livelihood by the labour of their hands, are debarred by want of means from the possibility of acquiring knowledge."

Letters patent granted to the "virtuous" De la Salle in 1725 enabled, in the face of much opposition, the first school for the poor to be started at Rheims, whence the movement spread far and wide in the North of France. It was not, however, till the Revolution that laws began to be passed for the establishment of a State system of instruction, which, however, as will be seen later on, remained, if not a dead letter for two generations, at least very inadequately observed.

The Government statistics of education for 1829, the first year of their issue, show that, out of 38,149 parishes (*communes*), 23,919 only possessed schools, with an attendance of 969,340 pupils, the salaries of the teachers ranging from threepence to one penny per month per scholar, payable by such parents as could afford the fee, otherwise by the parish council. Notice is taken in these statistics of the inadequacy of the school premises in numerous instances, even the buildings provided by the parish authorities being unsuitable. We shall see later on the progress that has been since made.

In comparing or contrasting education in France and at home, let us observe, first, that the population of the two countries may be taken to be nearly the same, the census of 1891 giving a total for the United Kingdom of nearly 38,000,000, and the French census of 1886, 38,250,000. As the returns of the latter, however, show a diminution of over

500,000 within the previous ten years, our population probably already exceeds that of France.

It will be convenient for my purpose to dispose of a few more statistics before proceeding further. Observe, then, that the State Budget in France for primary education amounted in 1891 to a little under £7,000,000, which went to the maintenance of 60,120 schools, with a staff of 97,000 teachers, instructing 4,000,000 pupils. The figures for the United Kingdom in 1888 were:

State subsidy, £5,070,000
Rates, £4,620,000 } = £9,690,000

for the support of 30,500 schools, attended by 4,605,000 pupils. Here comparison by means of statistics ends. For while in England the Government makes grants to all primary public schools alike, in France it leaves to the free (*libres*) or denominational schools the duty of supporting themselves, requiring only that the teachers in them should have earned a regular "Brevet," or diploma granted by the University of France. Of these free public elementary schools there are nearly 9,000 with a staff of 10,600 teachers, and an attendance of 850,000 pupils. By far the greater number of them are under the direction of Roman Catholic committees, as may be deduced from the circumstance that the Protestant population of the country is under 750,000, or under 2 per cent. of the whole, who are ministered to by 700 pastors (Lutheran and Reformed), or, as compared with the 50,000 priests, $1\frac{2}{5}$ per cent. In what follows, therefore, account will not be taken of the Protestant schools or churches, which flourish, moreover, in but few districts, although it is not to be inferred from this that either Christian or Jewish dissentients from the Church of the majority are without considerable influence in the State.

I am aware that statistics are apt to be fallacious, and may be made available for often opposite purposes; but, assuming the figures just stated to be accurate, it would seem that France is twice as well supplied with schools as we are, and that their attendance exceeds ours by some hundreds of thousands. It is to be noted, however, that we have a great number of private or adventure schools, which cannot well be enumerated, and are not taken account of in Government or other official returns and statistics. It is probable, therefore, that the two countries are equally well equipped in the machinery for primary public instruction.

Now a word or two regarding the buildings, the government of the schools, and the instruction imparted.

A great many, perhaps most, of the elementary schools are new, or of recent construction—say ten or twelve years old. They are exceedingly well planned and arranged, with, as is

natural to the French, a considerable attention paid to architectural display. The rooms are large and lofty, with partitions, having windows in the centre, so that the headmaster or mistress may command a view of every class. In front is a sufficient playground, supplied with gymnastic apparatus, and on either side sheds for exercise in wet weather, one for the boys and the other for the girls, with the offices behind. The country schools are generally in the same block as the *mairie*, or town-hall, where the parish business is transacted, and the teacher's house is either over the school or at one side of it. The old schools have been mostly enlarged or made higher, and all are equally well supplied with maps, object pictures, and blackboards. The instruction is in all cases free, and in the Government schools books and stationery are supplied. The education is also compulsory. So far as I was able to ascertain, the teachers are paid on an average £40 to £80, whereas in England the average is about double. They all have, as already stated, a diploma, and have received their training at special seminaries or colleges, of which each department has one. The governing body of every school consists of a committee, of which the mayor is chairman, and the others elected. The curé, or parson, is now by law excluded from the State schools; but in the *écoles libres*, or "free" or "congregational" schools he is generally the most influential of the governors. Christian religion has been banished from the State schools, and to supply its place various manuals have been compiled describing the duties of citizens, the most approved, perhaps, being entitled, "Éducation morale et instruction civique," by M. Mezières, a deputy and member of the French Academy, and "Cours d'instruction civique," by Professor Mabilleau. They are useful books, very simply written, and as regards religion, neutral. Other books published by the Society "Anti-cléricale," such as "Le Catéchisme républicain du Libre penseur," and the "Exposé sommaire de la réligion Chrétienne à l'usage des Écoles laïques," published by the Société de l'enseignement National, are distinctly anti-Christian and Voltairian in their tone. They are recommended by their compilers to be used in the last year of the school course, so that the pupils may finish their "education" well primed with arguments against Christianity, and stored with the teaching of the advanced freethinkers.

In regard to the secular instruction imparted, it may be pronounced excellent. The French are very skilful in the compiling of simple and well-graduated school-books, of which the educational shops are full almost to overflowing. A number of these books are admirably illustrated, and are often more than a match for our own on the same subjects. There are also in circulation many valuables treatises on the theory

and method of instruction. From what has been already said, it need not be pointed out that under the present system Christianity is excluded from the course. The various ministers of religion are at liberty to impart their own tenets in the church, or "temple," or at home, as the parents may elect, but they are forbidden to open their mouths in the national schools. A generation is in this way growing up to which Christianity may in many cases be unknown, and where known presented in colours which class it with the mythologies and make it ridiculous—with what result is not doubtful, as the statistics of crime have been adduced to show.

The State schools, of course, cover the country, being established in nearly every parish, or, at least, in every school district; whereas the "Congregational" schools are only to be found in the larger towns, where sufficient means may be available for the maintenance, out of private effort and benevolence, of second, or more supplementary, or religious schools, managed, as already said, by the clergy and their friends, and under teachers from the society of the "Frères Chrétiens" or other ecclesiastical source; or, in the case of girls' and infant schools, of a sister of one or other of the religious orders. These religious schools are often preferred by the parents, and as often, perhaps, not—for the State schools enjoy certain advantages connected, for example, with prizes, treats, and the like, organized by the mayor or the Town Council, upon which both parents and children set a certain value. There is, indeed, a sharp rivalry between the two, and in many places the Church attracts more pupils to its schools than the State does to its. As regards the ordinary routine of school learning, there is little to choose between them. The Government inspector does not visit the "free" schools, except to report upon their sanitary condition.

The course of study in the State schools is regulated by a code similar to the one we are familiar with at home, and the Minister of Public Instruction issues circulars from time to time directing attention to matters he may deem important. To every separate subject of instruction a certain number of hours per week is assigned, while the holidays and vacations are directed by the same authority. The masters and mistresses seem thus to be left very little discretion. In practice, however, those sometimes long-winded circulars are said to meet with scant attention, for they are as often as not regarded as academic and impracticable. And here I may observe that the rulers in all departments of the Government inherit from their predecessors a strong disposition to issue ordinances and enact regulations with little or no reference to the possibility of their being observed. When, for example, in

the first outburst of Revolutionary zeal the Constituant Assembly decreed that all children should receive suitable instruction free, and that schools should be everywhere built, it does not seem to have occurred to anyone that no funds were available, and therefore were not assigned for this purpose. This, however, is only one out of many instances that might be adduced to show what the French confess they are often unmindful of—looking before they leap. Some years later Napoleon issued similar orders, which, like the first, remained a dead letter for want of money.

The ministries of to-day, in like manner, it may be added, expend much paper and ink on matters that might be left alone, or to the discretion of the subordinate staffs; but then they would not be in evidence. Much entertainment might be derived from reading a recent long circular upon the desirableness of encouraging out-of-door games in the school playgrounds, in which the English are often referred to as examples. A single page might have sufficed for all the minister had to urge; but in this case he composed a very elaborate academical essay upon the value of physical exercises for the development of the muscles and the promotion of health of body.

And this leads me to observe that in the French schools and colleges generally, for both sexes, such continual watchfulness is exercised over the pupils that they have little opportunity of developing either a muscular physique or an independent character, and consequently they carry with them into life a certain flabbiness of body and a mistrust of themselves, and aversion to act on their own responsibility which distinguishes them remarkably in both respects from the British race. When the scholars go forth into the town or village they are required to march in military fashion, two by two, under the eye of a teacher, and even in the playground a master or mistress is told off to look after them. In this way the sense of being superintended, cared for and observed becomes habitual to them, and when they become men and women they lean upon others, and chiefly upon the Government, to support them in undertakings which Englishmen would start for themselves, or for direction in moral or spiritual affairs upon the priests or anti-clerical leaders, as the case may be. One result of this deeply-rooted system of tutelage, in which espionage plays so great a part, may be seen, among many other instances that might be adduced, in the recent Panama scandals, which exhibited the exceeding credulity of the people and the facility with which they allowed themselves to be fleeced by scheming speculators, who themselves probably were as much misled by others as they misled those who were reposing confidence in

them. It might be alleged, however, that these scandals were the natural outcome of the spirit of gambling, which infects all classes, apparently, of French society.

Another result upon the national character of what may be called their nursery training is not so observable to the French themselves as it is to strangers like ourselves. There are few who hold, or at least confess to, any fixed political creed or opinions, deriving these temporarily from the Government that may happen to be in power. This accounts for the light-heartedness with which they change their rulers and their political systems. Having tried a variety of Governments, they are attached to none in particular, if they have not, indeed, ceased to believe in the efficacy of any or of all. And they are quite ready to make new and perilous experiments, finality being a term as unknown to them as settlement is an unwelcome one. The more instructed among them, indeed, confess that they still retain the character Cæsar gave them—of Gauls with the fickleness and passion of the Celtic race. I seem to be wandering from my subject, so will add no more at present than to observe that this character has been maintained in the course of their history—the suppression of the Parliaments and the absorption of their powers, such as they were, into the sole authority of the Monarchy from the time of Philip Augustus to Louis XIV., and from the "Grand Monarque," through the Revolution to Napoleon, having suffocated the spirit of independence.

I have, as will have been seen, reversed the order of my subjects. This was unintentional, but what has been already said will form a ground-work for observations upon the aspects of religion in France. These at times and places appear dark, at others bright. So far as external circumstances are concerned, the prospects of the Church are not encouraging. Where a generation is in the process of formation, the majority of whom have not been nurtured in religion, the presumption is that they will lose hold or connection with it for life, and will bring up their own children in the neglect of what they themselves have never given attention to. There is a continual friction between the Church and the present State in France. Each desires to be master, and where there is not open war, there is suppressed hostility. In some places the Church appears able to hold its own, and to carry the population with it, in others to be little more than a name and a tradition.

(To be continued.)

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