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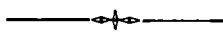
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quired for use at Divine service. At any rate, it would seem by the date of the Advertisements (1566) all the Popish vestments had practically disappeared, and it may be doubted whether many copes were in use, at service, even in "the greater churches."

Now, on this construction, the Advertisements could not have contained "other order" under Section 25, altering the rubric of 1552; but they may very well have been of statutory force under Section 26, which empowered the Queen with the like advice to ordain and publish "further ceremonies or rites." On this hypothesis the Advertisements, which sanctioned copes in cathedral and collegiate churches, would have effected a raising, not a lowering, of the legal standard of ritual, and that it was so regarded is borne out by contemporary evidence. One Elizabethan writer cited by Mr. Tomlinson, p. 130, puts this as follows: "The article that the minister shall wear a cope with gospeler and pisteler agreeably smelleth of superstition, and as far as I can find both against Her Highness' Injunctions, and besides the Book of Common Prayer."

In short, law and fact may be said to coincide with church tradition in showing that the mediæval vestments abolished in 1552 have (except during the short reign of Queen Mary) remained illegal down to the present day. That no change in the law was intended at the statutory revision in 1662 has been so generally acknowledged that there is no necessity to go into that question here.

BENJAMIN WHITEHEAD.



### ART. III.—THE LIFE OF DE LA SALLE,

THE FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETY OF THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS.

THE Society of the Christian Brothers is much more widely known than the life of its distinguished founder, although to him they chiefly owe the great success of their work as educationalists. He was a man of wonderful sagacity and energy; and, whilst his lot was cast amidst the superstitious gloom of the Church of Rome, this did not prevent him from pursuing, with admirable zeal and self-denial, as the one object of his life, the education of the poor. A sketch of the most striking features of his career may interest our readers, as viewed in connection with the work of his Brotherhood.

Jean Baptiste de la Salle, born at Rheims in 1651, came of a high family ; but when very young he sacrificed his worldly prospects, and gave himself with intense ardour to the service of his Church. He can scarcely be described as a man of brilliant genius, and yet he was endowed with very special gifts of mind and heart, which marked him out for peculiar usefulness. When he was only sixteen he had already won such golden opinions of his piety and ability that he was made Canon of the Cathedral of Rheims. Strange as it may seem nowadays, he was raised to that high dignity before he could have received ordination. With that view, the youthful Canon had to undergo a long course of study in the colleges of Rheims and of St. Sulpice in Paris. Had he been ambitious, he might have easily climbed to higher ecclesiastical eminence ; but he found a more congenial sphere for his talents in the lowly task of teaching poor children, a work in those days little thought of and very inefficiently performed. A lady of fortune, Madame de Maillefer, offered to supply the funds, whilst he applied himself to the organization of the schools.

There was no lack of money or of scholars, but where were the teachers ? They had to be both found and trained. A stern ascetic himself, he thought it necessary to prepare them by a course of rigorous discipline. Accordingly, he took the young men that offered themselves into his own house, a step which mortally offended his family and fellow-townsmen. The rules that he imposed were at first extremely irksome to his pupils. Still, he would not give way, and in order to set them an example of self-denial, in 1683 he resigned his Canonry, divided his private property amongst the poor, and resolved to trust to Providence and to charity for his own support and that of his work.

Beginning with twelve youths suited to his purpose, he formed them into a society to be known as "the Brothers of the Christian Schools," under a perpetual vow of obedience. Gradually others joined them. Schools were opened in other towns besides Rheims, to which they were appointed masters. As the number of candidates increased, he established a normal college for them. After a time the fame of his new institution reached Paris, and its headquarters was transferred to the metropolis, from which, as a centre, it rapidly extended itself.

But the weak point in his system in those days was the morbid asceticism of the principal and his followers. Whilst he practised the severest self-mortification, he compelled the Brothers to live together in a miserable, ill-furnished house, with dilapidated doors and windows, exposed to all the vicissitudes of weather, to sleep on hard boards covered with

a little straw, and to subsist on broken food supplied by charity. His rules were, in fact, so intolerably severe as to call forth loud protests from the public. The Bishop of Chartres, who had received one of their schools into that town, having, on a visit to the Brothers, found hair-shirts and whips in use for self-discipline, carried them away, and forbade such practices, as incompatible with the laborious duties of schoolmasters. The Archbishop of Paris also ordered an inquiry into the matter, and La Salle was compelled to considerably modify his rules.

In spite, however, of the unnatural character of their lives, through the untiring energy and perseverance of La Salle and his followers, a network of schools, not only elementary, but some of a higher grade, was established in the chief towns of France. Their aim was not simply educational, it was also of a distinctly proselytizing nature. They took advantage of the royal statute enacted in 1698, which required all children, particularly those whose parents professed the reformed faith, to attend school and catechizing up to the age of fourteen. To this the Bishop of Alais added a special injunction upon the Calvinists to send their sons to the schools of the Brothers. A conscience clause was a security for liberty unknown in those days, and thus the Brothers were enabled to instil their religious principles into the susceptible minds of the young, without regard to the wishes of parents.

The Jansenists, as well as the Protestants, stoutly opposed La Salle and his work. At Marseilles their resistance was so strong that the Brothers were intending to withdraw. In a very singular way they were induced to remain. A girl, who was supposed to possess a sort of gift of clairvoyance, was the medium employed for the purpose. After communicating, she fell into a trance. When, after some hours, she came out of it, she went to La Salle's confessor, and said to him: "Tell Monsieur de la Salle not to remove the Brothers from Marseilles. They are there now like an imperceptible grain; but it is the mustard-seed of the Gospel, and their work will yield abundant fruit." Acting on this, as if a Divine direction, they continued their work. It would seem that clairvoyance (if it were such) then took a more practical form than it generally assumes in the present day.

On another occasion we are told that this good man evinced similar credulity. In 1713 he was preparing to retire from his work into the monastery of Chartres, when a shepherdess, who had become a recluse, informed him that such was not the will of God, and that he ought not to desert his post. Again he obeyed what he regarded as an intimation from above.

At length, in 1719, worn out by labours, anxieties, and

austerities, he died, at the age of sixty-eight, when he left behind him 281 Brothers, 123 classes, and 9,000 pupils. Even his last days were clouded by conflict with 'his ecclesiastical superiors. At St. Ouen, near Rouen, the Brotherhood had obtained permission to celebrate the Mass in a private chapel; but the curé of the parish objected to this as an intrusion, and, since La Salle would not yield, he was placed under an interdict by the Archbishop of Rouen. These things are worthy of notice as throwing some light on the boasted unity of the Roman Church, when we see what strained relations often existed between the leader of such an important movement within its pale and the ecclesiastical authorities. Nothing, however, succeeds like success, and, although this eminent and zealous educationist was frequently opposed and thwarted by his superiors during his life, after his death the Popes and other dignitaries strove to make amends by lavishing the highest honours upon his memory. Gregory XVI. beatified him, and Pius IX. proposed to canonize him. The words that Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Antony were certainly reversed in this case. It could not be said of La Salle,

The evil that men do lives after them;  
The good lies oft interred with their bones.

It is indeed most sad that so noble and single-minded a man should throughout his life have been held in the thralldom of Romish error and superstition; and yet, like many others, he was far better than the system to which he was attached, and the good he did still remains in the world-wide services rendered by his successors to the cause of education. When we compare the methods introduced by him and his colleagues with those now, after nearly two centuries, generally adopted in our elementary schools and in other countries, we are not a little surprised to find in how many points they anticipated modern improvements. Thus, whilst the Brothers' principal aim has always been to impart a strictly religious education according to the principles of their own Church, they have spared no pains in cultivating their minds in the manner best suited to the station in life of their scholars. In doing this, they have from the first made their schools for the poor entirely gratuitous. At one time, indeed, La Salle undertook the education of fifty young Irish noblemen entrusted to him by Louis XIV., who were joined by other boarders from the higher classes; but their payments were applied to the support of the other schools. Later on he opened a *pensionnat* near Rouen for the sons of wealthier families. In this case again the receipts were thrown into the common fund, and the

Brothers received no additional payments. So it is still. The gratuitous character of their work has largely contributed to its popularity and success.

It is also not a little remarkable that La Salle originated what is now known as the simultaneous method in place of the mutual, which had been previously universal. In other words, he divided the scholars into classes, and each class into three sections, according to the capacity and intelligence, not the ages, of the boys. Each division had its own master, and the subjects were arranged on a graduated plan, and taught orally to the whole class at once. At the same time, the more intelligent pupils were employed in teaching the others during the temporary absence of the master, and were dignified by the name of *écoliers inspecteurs*. The system thus resembled the mixed one followed in the Bell and Lancaster schools of England. M. Gréard, the Vice-Rector of the Paris Academy, in a recent treatise on education, frankly credits the Brothers with this important reform, and states that from 1867 to 1877 no religious or Roman Catholic school in France, except two, had less than three classes, whereas eighty out of one hundred and fourteen lay schools had no more than one or two classes. This is no longer the case, and in this respect the Christian Brothers led the way.

Another equally important reform which they introduced was in teaching the vernacular instead of Latin, for before La Salle's time the Latin Psalter was the first book taught in even the elementary schools. On this account their enemies gave them the name of "ignorantins," as if they were ignorant of Latin—a title more applicable to those that applied it to them. Acting on the same rational principles, the Brothers were required in their secular teaching not to be content with mere mechanical or rote work, but to thoroughly explain the reasons of things, and to exercise the minds of their pupils with questions after the Socratic method, and in accordance with Bacon's maxim, "*Prudens interrogatio est dimidium scientiæ.*"

Moreover, schools and classes for adults appear to have been first devised by the inventive spirit of La Salle.

In 1699 he opened the first French Sunday-school for youths, where, however, they were taught, not the religious subjects befitting the Lord's Day, but geography, geometry, arithmetic, drawing, and the like. Technical teaching, to which of late years so much importance has been rightly assigned, was in some instances made part of the course. M. Duruy, the Minister of Public Instruction in 1867, went so far as to say that to him France owes the general adoption of this branch of education. Normal colleges for masters also

formed an integral feature of his system ; and he even founded a reformatory for vicious and neglected boys. Infants' schools do not appear to have been then thought of ; but with this exception, all the principal elements of popular education on which this last decade of the nineteenth century so much prides itself had been more or less anticipated. So true is it that "there is no new thing under the sun"; nor is it surprising that a work, in many respects carried on upon such rational methods, has in the face of strong opposition been so successful, and is in the present day so widely extended over both hemispheres.

Leading members of the Society have been highly honoured at the International Congresses of Antwerp, Vienna, and Paris in 1871, 1873, 1875.

According to the returns in 1892, there were in connection with it 1,750 schools, with 7,252 classes, 314,133 scholars, 13,262 Brothers. Of these schools, 1,306 were in France and its colonies, and 444 in other countries, including Ireland, Belgium, Egypt, Turkey, Madagascar, China, Canada, and Chili. This vast and complicated system must be a very powerful engine in the hands of Rome for the propagation of her doctrines. However much we may admire the zeal and devotion of its agents, we are very far from sympathizing with their religious views and practices. Men bound by rigid vows, secluded from the joys and interests of family life, and debarred from the wholesome stimulus of social advancement, are certainly not the best fitted to have the care of youth. The stern discipline to which they are themselves subjected is sure to reflect itself in their treatment of their pupils, and to lead to undue repression of their natural instincts. Far better is it that masters and mistresses, as Christian men and women, should live in the world, and as parents, or free to become such, should be able to sympathize with both parents and children in their social joys and sorrows. Still, the life of La Salle may serve to stimulate the zeal of those who are guided by purer and higher principles, and to encourage all who are striving to promote sound religious education in our country.

W. BURNET.

