

ble proportion of the college endowments—amounting in all to about £200,000 a year—is absorbed by what, with more than doubtful taste, Lord Salisbury thought fit to designate as “idle fellowships.”

He proposes, therefore, to abolish many of these “idle fellowships,” and to divert the endowments which are appropriated to them from collegiate to University purposes; and the machinery by which this diversion and the other reforms contemplated under the bill are to be carried out is the familiar one of an Executive Commission. The members of this body are to hold office for seven years, and they are to wield during that period what is practically despotic power over the University of Oxford, its organization and its endowments—saving only the headships of the different colleges. These are now almost exclusively restricted to clerical holders of the office, and with this restriction Lord Salisbury does not propose to interfere. The Commissioners are to have regard “to the interests of religion, learning, and research,” and over professorships, fellowships, scholarships, and emoluments generally they are all but omnipotent. They may suppress, divide, consolidate or modify any emolument which is a hundred years old. They may put the endowments of any college or of all the colleges into a crucible and mix them up together, and then bring them out quite different things from what they were. They may appropriate any endowment to any new purpose consistent with the main design of the founder. They may remove it from the college to which it is appropriated, and apply it to the University or to other purposes connected therewith, provided always they have regard to the interests aforesaid of religion, learning, and research. The only checks upon them are the appointment of three members of the college which is undergoing operation to sit with the Commissioners as representatives of the college, the sanction of the Queen in Council to the statutes framed by the Commissioners, and the acquiescence of Parliament for twelve weeks, during which the statutes are to lie on the tables of the two Houses respectively.

These are sweeping proposals, and it is obvious that, if they become law, a great opportunity is given to make the very best of the University and to turn it out equipped with all the most perfect appliances of the nineteenth century. But when proposals approaching to the character of these have been made by any previous Government, the Commissioners to be appointed have had certain guiding principles laid down for them, either in the Act appointing them or in some previous report of a commission of enquiry. Lord Salisbury proposes to leave his Commissioners absolutely unfettered. He has given, as Lord Morley said on the second reading of the bill “blank powers to a blank commission,” and left them to do the best or worst they can. He has indicated a wish that more professorships should be established; that appliances and apparatus for study in science and art should be supplied; that “research” should be endowed; that the number of fellowships should be diminished; and that all matters connected with religion should be maintained *in statu quo*—i. e., that there should be no diminution and no increase of clerical restrictions. These, however, are but expressions of Lord Salisbury’s individual wishes, or, at the utmost, those of the existing Cabinet, and they have no necessary regulating or permanent effect.

The absence of any guiding principles on which the Commissioners must act is a serious blemish in the bill. But there are other blemishes which are more radical, and which rise to the dignity of something worse than blemishes. The tendency of the measure, and the tendency of Lord Salisbury’s mind, is to re-establish the predominance of the clergy of the Established Church in the government both of the colleges and the University. University reformers looked for fundamental alterations in the existing constitution of the University. At present, the initiative in University legislation is taken by a body called “Congregation,” which includes all Masters of Arts who reside within a mile of Oxford. No worse constituency could be well imagined. There are innumerable parish clergymen and college chaplains and clerical fellows resident within a mile of Oxford, but very few lay Masters of Arts or lay fellows. The laymen are engaged in their several occupations in London and elsewhere in the world outside the ecclesiastical and academic precincts. Liberals wish to see this body secularized, so to speak, but Lord Salisbury leaves it untouched. The heads of colleges are nearly all, *ex necessitate*, in holy orders. Liberals wish to see this restriction removed. Lord Salisbury expressly lays it down in his measure that these restrictions shall be preserved. Liberals maintain that the Universities owe everything to the influence of the non-resident lay fellows, who leave the lump of ecclesiastical and academic narrow-mindedness contributed by the clerical fellows. Lord Salisbury calls the non-resident fellows “idle,” and empowers his Commissioners to suppress all lay fellowships or convert them into clerical fellowships. It is certain that the ecclesiastical bias of the bill will not pass uncensured when

it reaches the House of Commons. The Dissenters will rise as one man in antagonism to it, and the Liberal party will support them as it did upon the Endowed-Schools Bill two years ago.

Lord Salisbury has not played his cards with the adroitness that one would have expected from the framer of this measure. In the early part of his speech, in introducing the bill, he hung out a bait to allure the scientific men to side with him. He indicated that some part of the endowment from the suppressed fellowships would be devoted to scientific research and education. But he could not resist a sneer at a body of men for whom he has an undisguised contempt. He complained of the sceptical spirit of enquiry prevalent among men of science, and added that if they could only get professional appointments of £1,000 a year in a religious institution like Oxford they might become like Rabagas in the play, who was a republican when out of office, but who, when he came into power, ordered the troops to fire upon his ancient friends. The gratification of hurling this sneer among an able and sensitive set of eminent men may have pleased the clerical office-seekers and time-servers in the University, but it has alienated the body of men which his measure was intended to conciliate or to bribe into acquiescence.

## 2. MIDDLE-CLASS EDUCATION IN HOLLAND.

*From a Correspondent.*

It is not unfrequently the case that great nations search laboriously for the solutions of problems which smaller people have completely solved, as one may say, without effort. We old-fashioned English are at present devoting much pains to discover a good system of education for our middle classes, and yet we have only to cross the channel in order to see in actual work one altogether satisfactory in a country whose manners, traditions, and laws are almost those of our own.

According to the Constitution of Holland there are three degrees of education—Primary, Middle, and Superior. As the Primary Education comprehends all schools intended for children from six to twelve years of age, and as the Universities, the Gymnasias, and other establishments where the study of the ancient languages occupies the first place are considered as belonging to the superior class, it follows that all educational establishments not included in one or other of these categories are regarded as establishments for middle-class education.

It appears that until the year 1862, the Dutch were no further advanced in respect of this kind of education than we are now. Wishing to put an end to this state of things, the Minister of the Interior (the Home Secretary) of the time, M. Thorbecke, formerly Professor in Leyden University, presented to Parliament a Bill, which was passed into law at the beginning of the following year. From the discussions which preceded the adoption of this law, we learn that its object is to insure a suitable education to young people who are not obliged to learn a business before the age of from 14 or 17 years, and for whom, although they are not intended to take up University studies, a deeper and wider instruction is necessary than that which can be obtained at the primary school.

Setting out from the principle that youths who quit the primary schools may be divided into two classes—those who are able to devote only two years, and those who can afford to give five years to further study—it was decided that there should be two kinds of middle-class schools, the one to have a two years’ course, and the other a course of five years.

The programme of study in the establishments in which the course is one of two years, and which are called Lower Middle-Class Schools, includes, in the first place, the elements of Mathematics, Mechanics, Physics, Chemistry, Natural History, Geography, History, and the Dutch Language, and, in addition, Drawing, Gymnastics, and some idea of Political Economy and of Technology for towns, and of Agriculture for the country. The teachers in these establishments are, moreover, required to devote the evenings to courses for young artisans or agriculturists, who are prevented from taking the courses which are given during the day. As to the number of these schools, the law requires that each commune whose population exceeds 10,000 shall establish at its own expense at least one Lower Middle-Class School.

The programme for those schools in which the course is one of five years, and which we may designate Upper Middle-Class Schools is of course more extensive. It embraces first the branches included in the Lower Schools, but as might be expected, this education in the Upper Schools goes much deeper. Then comes three foreign languages—French, English, and German. The law requires, moreover, that the pupils should receive some notion of the political institutions of the country and of its statistics, including those of the Colonies. Needless to add, that in a country like Holland the tenure of land must form an integral part of education.