

A FRENCH VIEW OF EDUCATION FOR WOMEN.

QUITE recently there was opened at Macon, in France, a school for the higher education of young girls. The occasion was considered of so high importance that M. Spuller, the Minister of the Interior, presided at the opening and delivered a discourse, which appears in the *Revue Internationale de l'Enseignement*, Paris. The opinions he expresses in regard to the education which should be given to young girls may be considered those of the French Government, and are, therefore, worthy of consideration by all who are interested in female education. M. Spuller said :

"It is only since the establishment of the Third Republic that there have been in France institutions for the higher education of young girls. Not that there have been lacking at any time well-instructed women. French literature counts among its masterpieces works written by women.

"Those who are best fitted to appreciate intellectual productions do not hesitate to put the letters of of Madame de Sevigne in the same rank as the writings of the greatest French authors. There have been, however, until lately no institutions where a higher education could be given to the daughters of the households belonging to those social classes which, by dint of labor and perseverance, rose, little by little, from the humblest conditions to the highest, and which constitute, so to speak, democracy in its activity and its progress.

"This defect in the French system of education has not been by any means universally perceived. Even while this school at Macon was rising from its foundations, reproaches were addressed to the Government. It was said : 'Do you want to alter nature? Are not men and women two beings

essentially different? How, then, can they receive the same education? Do you not understand that they ought to be educated quite differently and according to methods altogether adverse?' The Government has answered these reproaches by finishing the building and opening it as a place of instruction. In the founding of such an institution at Macon, women may be pardoned for thinking that they are having a sweet revenge. For it was precisely at Macon, as ecclesiastical history relates, that a Council once met to deliberate on the question whether women have souls.

"Why then multiply buildings at needless cost? say those who are still unable to appreciate a higher education for young girls. Why not educate youth of both sexes, at the same institution, in the same classes, as is done on the other side of the Atlantic? Divers good reasons might be given for this separation of the sexes, but one, in our view all-controlling, will suffice. It is that we do not think that schools for the higher education of young girls should be exactly like those intended for boys. We do not think that there is but one way to instruct everyone, women as well as men. We believe that the same sciences, be they as dry as arithmetic or algebra, be they as pleasant as natural history; that history, literature, good letters, those precious educators, those sweet consolers of women as well as men—that all these can and ought to be taught differently to men and women. There is a feminine education and there is a masculine education. Each science can and ought to be taught to girls by education from the special point of view of girls, and the same science can and ought to be taught to boys from the special point of view of boys. We go further. We