

with this example before his eyes, Dr. Playfair calls the autonomy we possess as regards our Secondary and Higher Education "chaos," and desires to reduce this chaos to order by bringing Secondary and Higher Education under State control, overlooking, apparently, the fact that in 1870 it was in University Education that France felt most severely the heavy hand of the State.

M. Jules Simon, a former Minister of Education in France, thus writes in 1882 of the monopoly of University Education established by Napoleon: "The Organic Decree of 1808 had a double import. It created a body of functionaries charged with the instruction of all classes throughout the country under a single management, and it invested this body in the person of its chief with absolute authority over all educational establishments set on foot by private adventure alongside of it. . . . It was an intellectual and moral despotism side by side with a political and administrative despotism." It took long for Education in France to emancipate itself from this intellectual yoke. "It has been," says M. Simon, "destroyed in three stages, and at long intervals: the monopoly of Primary Education by the law of 1833, that of Secondary Education by the law of 1850, and that of the Higher Education by the law of 1879." The extent of the control maintained by the State in the domain of the Higher Education may be inferred from these words of M. Simon: "During the fifteen years which followed the passing of this memorable law [of 1850], the Higher Education alone remained subject to ministerial despotism. No school could be opened, no single lesson could be given, without the permission of the Government, which had the right of refusing, and which generally exercised that right."

Whatever, then, may have been the

cause of French intellectual sterility during 1870 and after, it cannot be set down to the want of connection between the Higher Education and the State. That connection existed with a vengeance.

Sir Lyon Playfair's specific for remedying some, if not all, of the shortcomings of our educational system is the appointment of a Minister of Education. We do not think he was particularly happy in the reasons he gave for such an appointment, nor are Englishmen likely to be convinced of the urgent need of such a Minister by being told that in this respect they are inferior to Egypt, Portugal, Greece and far off Japan. Such a line of reasoning would be quite as likely to raise doubts as to the connection between the national greatness and national well-being of a State and its Education Minister.

It is not to France alone that we need look to find evidence that a Minister of Instruction may possibly use his authority to extend his own power and to crush out all ideas that conflict with his own. It was the Cultus-Minister of Prussia, Raumer, who, suspecting Froebel of socialism and irreligion, issued an edict forbidding the establishment of schools after "Friedrich and Karl Froebel's principles,"—uncle and nephew included in one condemnation, although it was only in respect of the latter that there could have been any foundation for the suspicion of the Minister.

Sir Lyon Playfair, when he casts the horoscope of the future, and predicts that in the next Parliament a "Minister of Education will be created, as a nucleus round which the various educational materials may crystallize," is on unassailable ground; for it is as difficult to refute a prophecy as a sneer. Nor do we quarrel with the accuracy of his description of the function which he assigns to the Minister, as, oddly enough, he