

From the London Tablet.

THE CHURCH AND THE UNIVERSITY IN FRANCE.

In France, the University, governed by a board of Pantheists, and working throughout the whole kingdom by the agency of Pantheistic professors, enjoys an unwieldy monopoly over the entire field of secular education. No school can be opened throughout the length and breadth of France, unsubject to the jurisdiction of Pantheism, or without a license from its authorities. All the lay scholars throughout the kingdom are (in fact) bound to go through the course of studies followed in its colleges, inasmuch as no one can be admitted to practise in law or in medicine without the disgrace of its Bachelor's degree. The only exception to this intolerable monopoly is to be found in the ecclesiastical schools. Young men intended for the priesthood may be educated in the Episcopal seminaries. But they do it at their own risk; and if it should turn out that they have mistaken their vocation, their prospects in life are blasted. Their course of study will avail them nothing for either of the other learned professions. They must go back like children to the commencement of the University course, and pay with years of obscurity and poverty for the conscientiousness which made them abstain from inflicting dishonor on the priesthood.

With this exception, clogged with an insulting condition, and with the exception of such private schoolmasters as receive their license to teach religion or irreligion indiscriminately from the Pantheistic board, the education of French children is in the hands of the imperial colleges, in whose halls, it is avowed by the advocates of the system, infidelity is taught publicly and with applause by the ablest intellects of France. That this is not a very satisfactory system will be readily admitted by every candid person who is not either a Deist, an Atheist, or a Pantheist. It is far from giving satisfaction in France; nor is the dissatisfaction confined to the ranks of the Pious and the Catholic. The bishops it is true, protest publicly against it; but their complaints are endorsed (as we shall see) by the organs of French Protestantism, and, on several occasions, even the hard hearts of Administrative Ministerialism, have labored (or pretend to labor,) to find a remedy for the abuse. About every other year for the last six years have we had the programmes of a ministerial measure of educational reform. In 1837, in 1840, in 1841, such attempts were commenced with a good deal of parade and ostentation; and negotiations were entered into with the bishops with the object of devising some scheme of accommodation. A scheme of this kind was, in effect, drawn up by Mgr. Affre, of Paris, with the sanction of two other archbishops and six bishops, and presented to M. Villemain on the part of the French clergy. This scheme was indeed, deemed by many far too liberal in its concessions, and as such it was publicly denounced by the Bishop of Chartres and many other ecclesiastics. The plan, however, proved abortive, and the question still remains to be adjusted.

But though the University Colleges are avowedly on this irreligious footing, the government which, like most governments now-a-days, is besotted enough to see in religion a good instrument of police, and nothing more, must have the sanction of religion for these establishments. Accordingly, part of the staff of every college is an almoner or chaplain—a state functionary who is resident at the college—receives State alms (whence, we should imagine, his name;) and is employed in what we should call in this country a sort of French polish upon the students' minds—an artificial external plastering of religion over the surface of the soul—while the grain and substance of it is trained, moulded, and fashioned by unbelievers. However, the sacraments are administered to the scholars by these chaplains. Confession and communion—as often as respectability demands—are given them by contract; and so long as the bishop consents to wink at the courses of spiritualized sensualism, which are nicknamed philosophy, every thing goes on well and creditably. The students are trained up for damnation; and the administration has the credit of patronising religion. Can anything be imagined more comfortable on both sides?

However, during the last two years (as before) the clergy have exhibited many inconvenient symptoms of recalcitration. It is true that a short time ago the Archbishop of Paris published a statement of the case, in which he reproached the more warm advocates of religious independence for their over-zeal, and declared that the church and the crown were never more disposed than at the present moment to deal out a large measure of justice to the church. The events of the recent weeks show how inaccurately his grace then judged the matter.

Several of the bishops, as we have hinted, recently appeared disposed to withdraw the chaplains from colleges, where irreligion was notoriously taught. One of the first cases that occurred on this subject was that of the Coadjutor Bishop of Nancy. Under the pretext of having preached an objectionable sermon, the famous Abbe Lacordaire, the reviver of the illustrious Dominican order in France, was denied access to the chaplain of the college at Nancy (M. Lemblin,) at least through the gates of the establishment. The Coadjutor Bishop (Mgr. Menjaud) took affront at this insult, and threatened to withdraw the chaplain from the college. This threat was disregarded. At length his lordship proceeded to put it in execution, M. Lemblin was directed to take up his residence with the bishop outside the college; to continue his sacerdotal duties provisionally, up to a certain day: and then, if the Rector proved obstinate, to cease his functions altogether. The day is yet future, but the Rector has given no signs of concession. The Bishop has been to Paris, and has had several interviews with the minister, in order to bring about an amicable adjustment. In this he has had little success; nay, his efforts have been turned into ridicule, and garbled accounts of his private and official conversation have been published by the organs of the Uni-

versity, who have thereupon jeered and calumniated him, and have wound up their ribaldry by the stale and musty outcry of—"Jesuit!" So stands this case, which is yet only the beginning of troubles.

A new and well directed assault upon the Infidel University was directed by the hand of the Cardinal de Bonald, Archbishop of Lyons, in a letter directed to the Rector of the Academy there, from which we published a long extract three weeks ago. In this letter his Eminence professes no hostility to the University, so long as it fulfils its proper functions. On the contrary he desires its stability. But along with it he desires also the execution of the 69th clause of the fundamental law, which secures to the French citizen liberty of education as an inalienable right. Lutheran education for the Lutheran, Calvinistic education for the Calvinist, and for the Catholic child an entirely Catholic education. A philosophy (continues his Eminence) which may be Pantheistical, Deistical, Theistical, or Protestant, will not suit him. He thus proceeds:

"I do not know whether or not it enters into the project of the Minister of Public Instruction to make any changes this year in the personnel of the University colleges of the diocese of Lyons. As, however, it is possible that some such changes may take place, I consider it my duty to address you some frank and temperate remarks on the subject.

If the University have admitted professors whose principles cause alarm to Catholic families, it is certain that there are, as the Bishop of Belley has said, numerous very honorable exceptions. The diocese of Lyons has the happiness of being, at present, peculiarly favored in this respect. We find in its colleges men who unite the cultivation of letters with the strict observance of religious duties. Would not this happy state of things be seriously affected by the arrival of a professor who would mingle error with instruction? I indulge myself with the hope that it will not be so. But, Mr. Rector, as certain nominations may be imposed upon you, and as it may happen that a professor who enjoys the confidence of his pupils' parents may be compelled to give place to a colleague who, with respect to doctrine, may not merit that confidence in an equal degree, I think I might, in order to free myself from responsibility, throw off all reserve, and show you in advance the line of conduct which I should pursue in such a case.

Let Catholic students listen to Catholic lessons only, and I shall applaud the instruction of your schools; but if a professor, with a mind infected by a sceptical or materialist philosophy should come among you to insinuate into your hearts the poison of his doctrines—if he should profit by his position to undermine the authority of Revelation, and sap the foundations of the Catholic religion, silence would not become either the ministry by which I am honored, or the position I occupy. I forewarn you, Mr. Rector, and if the faith of my Catholic diocesans be not speedily placed beyond all reach of danger, I shall from that moment regard the presence of

an almoner in your colleges as a bitter mockery, and I shall not hesitate a moment as to the measures to be adopted;—I trust that I shall not be constrained to come to extremities so painful, but as we do not know what changes the superior authorities may make in the University establishments, I beg you, Mr. Rector, to make known to the Minister of Public Instruction the part that I intend to take if my young Catholic diocesans should be called on to receive a philosophical teaching in opposition to the symbols of our faith,—the doctrines of the Catholic Church."

The letter naturally caused some alarm—and a reply to it, in the *Journal des Debats*—it is said, from the pen of the Minister of Public Instruction—was speedily forthcoming, to threaten the bishops with the loss of their salaries if they persevered. But alas! this Ministerial thunder did not serve to allay the storm.

On the 26th of October there appeared another Episcopal letter from his Lordship of Chalons, in which, after describing the farce of a religious education in the University colleges, he thus proceeds to treat of the remedy:

"We may do as the Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons proposes, we may suppress the almoner, who is a priest only in name; we may take away his powers, or so reduce them as to prevent his abusing them to any body's injury. The spiritual and religious direction of the pupils may be entirely remitted to the Cure of the parish, to whom responsibility and all duty belong, as the proper pastor of the place. By this means all will be legal; the principal may continue, since he likes it, and no one can prevent him (which is a great misfortune) to profess his Pantheism.—The Cure, on his side, may do his duty, and parents may be informed, for that is very necessary, that instructed and educated in this manner, their children have little chance of admission to their first communion at the parish church. For those of the college of which we have had a specimen last year, there is no longer any doubt upon the matter. This case, Mr. editor, is not chimerical. It is one that has been witnessed in a district that I know, but which I name not. Consequently nothing can be more wise than the advice of the Lord Archbishop of Lyons, in whose sentiments and affections I entirely agree. We say to the Minister as he has said—"It does not please you to be Catholic, and does not please us to set foot in your establishments. Wherefore two kinds of teaching in one house? If yours ought to prevail why do you not say so? Why ask us to act in your colleges a part that does not at all become us? It is to render us ridiculous, and it is making you say clearly enough; 'We are all hypocrites, men who want your money.' These are noble titles! I know, however, that there are exceptions."

In three years, in England, 361,864 marriages took place; consequently no fewer than 723,728 individuals entered into wedlock, and of the parties 304,836 could not sign their names!