

OPEN LETTERS.

State Education of Frenchwomen.

THOUGH the leaders of the French Revolution favored the education of the people, irrespective of sex, the reform was never carried into effect. How little was done in the same direction by the Restoration may be judged from the single fact that a royal ordinance set aside just fifty thousand francs for primary instruction! It is not surprising, therefore, that when Louis Philippe came to the throne more than half of the male and over three quarters of the female working-class of France could not read. It was not till 1833 that Guizot succeeded in establishing state primary schools, and even then only for boys; and not till 1867 that French girls were treated, in this respect, with equal justice. Voltaire's remark is pat here: "*La France arrive tard à tout*," and the truth of Jules Simon's finally dawned on the nation: "Every time a woman is educated, a little school is founded."

To-day elementary instruction is rapidly on the increase among French girls. For instance, the latest report—that for 1887—of the number of women who could sign their marriage certificates shows an advance of 1.7 per cent. in respect to the preceding year; 83 per cent. of them could affix their names. There were 117 more girls' schools in 1889-90 than in 1888-89, and 468 new teachers. In 1889, 97,910 girls applied for primary certificates, as against 100,269 for the following year—an increase of 2359; while 75,079 in the former and 79,313 in the latter year passed the examination and got the certificates—an increase of 4234. Furthermore, the scholarships accorded in 1892 in the superior primary classes show that in France, as is often the case elsewhere, girls stand higher than boys in school work. Thus, 2642 boys and 1476 girls competed: 1104 of the former and 693 of the latter passed; while 643 boys and 436 girls finally won scholarships. A somewhat similar result was reached in the competitive examination for the *agrégation*—a very high and difficult degree to obtain—in living languages. Between 1883 and 1887, 20 women competed and 12 passed, while 108 men competed and 62 passed—the women thus being a little more successful than the men.

But the establishment and growth of state secondary instruction for women is, perhaps, the most notable event in the history of female education in France. Prior to 1878 secondary instruction was very poor and very scarce, and was exclusively in the hands of the Church and private individuals. The state took no part in the work. In 1867 M. Duruy, then minister of public instruction, attempted to supply the want, in part at least, and founded courses of lectures (*cours*). But the Catholic Church vigorously combated the in-

novation, and public opinion did not seem to welcome it; so at the end of the first decade of the experiment, only some half-dozen *cours* appear to have taken root. Even in Paris, notwithstanding its population and the reputation of the professors, there were but 128 pupils at the *cours*. In 1892-93 the number of paying pupils was only 122.

It was not till 1878 that M. Camille Sée, then a deputy and now a member of the *Conseil d'Etat*, secured the passage of a bill which empowered the state to take upon itself the secondary education of girls,—“one of the fundamental creations of the Third Republic,” says M. Berthelot,—and three more years had to elapse before the first girls' *lycée*—that of Montpellier—was actually opened. Up to 1881 not a single girls' *lycée* existed in all France, though boys' *lycées* dated from the days of the First Empire. At present, however, there are about thirty, and, in addition, nearly as many *collèges*, and some sixty *cours*.¹ The *lycées* and *collèges* have about 8000 pupils in charge of about 1000 teachers, 800 of whom are women and 200 men. Such is the brilliant result obtained in twelve years' time. From 1881 to 1887 the average annual increase of pupils in the *lycées* was about 550, the total number being 71 in the first, and 3330 in the last named year. In 1889 the total had risen to 3672, in 1891 to 4963, and in 1892 to 5625. The total for the *lycées*, *collèges*, and *cours*—that is, the whole number of girls receiving state secondary instruction of every kind—was, in 1892, 12,697. The preceding year the total had been 11,645, showing an increase for 1892 of 1052.² The following statistics of the diplomas delivered by the *lycées* show, in another way, the growing popularity of these schools. Thus, in 1883, eight girls were graduated in the five years' course, and 80 in the three years' course. In 1884 the figures were 37 and 153; in 1885, 85 and 253; in 1886, 95 and 336; and in 1887, 129 and 403. The cost of the whole state establishment for girls' secondary instruction was put down in 1887 at nearly three million francs. It has considerably increased since that time.

It is, of course, in Paris that these *lycées* have developed most rapidly. The capital already possesses three of them, and others will probably be established in the near future. It cost 1,650,000 francs to open the first—the Lycée Fénelon,—and 850,000 francs, the second—the Lycée Racine. That they meet a want is proved by the fact that, at the beginning of the school year 1892-93, the Fénelon was so crowded that the adding of an annex was discussed, and in the mean time a series of *cours* was established in the Faubourg Poissonnière. These *cours* were so overcrowded last winter that their erection into a *lycée* is contemplated.

¹ A French *lycée* may be likened to our best high schools. A *collège* is an inferior *lycée*, supported mainly by the department. A *cours* is supported by fees, and is less complete and more independent of the state than the *lycée* or *collège*.

² These statistics for 1891-92 have not yet appeared in any printed report, but are kindly furnished me by M. Elie Rabier, Director of Secondary Instruction at the Department of Public Instruction.

The curriculum of the *lycées* embraces morals, the French language, reading aloud, and at least one living tongue; ancient and modern literature; geography and cosmography; the history of France and an acquaintance with general history; arithmetic, and the elements of geology, chemistry, physics, and natural history; hygiene, domestic economy, sewing, the elements of common law, drawing, music, and gymnastics. This course of study covers five years, and is divided into two parts—the first of three and the second of two years. Diplomas are given at the end of the two years' course, and also for the completion of the full five years of study. If this program of studies be compared with that laid down for the boys' *lycées*, it will be evident that those who drew it up were governed by M. Legouvé's dictum, "*L'égalité dans la différence.*"

One of the objects which M. Sée and his republican colleagues had in view in passing the bill of 1878 was to offset the educational work of the convents, which were, and in fact are still, hostile to the republic. "It is a political law and also a social law," M. Sée said on one occasion. "I see only one inconvenience in this law, if well applied," remarked an English statesman; "it will render republican France too strong in Europe." "We cheerfully accept this prediction," exclaims M. Sée, in a burst of patriotism.

"The results have surpassed our hopes," said M. Sée in 1889. "We studied what other nations¹ had done, and we thereby saw so clearly what we ought to do ourselves, that we have outstripped them." One of these results was the establishment of two admirable normal schools,—the Superior Primary Instruction Normal School at Fontenay-aux-Roses, near Paris, the like of which does not exist in any other country, M. Buisson² informs me, in that its pupils must be teachers before becoming pupils again, and which prepares principals and teachers for the primary normal schools and for the superior primary schools,—and the Superior Normal School of Girls' Secondary Instruction, which was founded in 1881 at Sèvres, also near Paris, and which is another creation of M. Sée, and it is the counterpart of the famous Paris Ecole Normale for men. The opening of these institutions called for an outlay of 2,400,000 francs in the single item of preparing the buildings. Between the years 1881 and 1887, 909 young women applied for admission, of which number 219 were received. In January, 1889, 153 of its graduates were professors in the various state institutions for girls, where they draw salaries ranging, in the *lycées*, from 4500 to 7000 francs per annum, and where they have aided in almost supplanting the male professors, who at first monopolized this field of work.

Progress may be reported also in the domain of higher or university education, as is evidenced by the following table, kindly furnished me by the director of

superior instruction, which gives the number of female students during the past four years in all the state schools of France for higher education:

	1889-90	1890-91	1891-92	1892-93
Law	3	2	2	2
Medicine	142	104	123	119
Sciences	28	23	22	26
Letters	111	222	158	173
Pharmacy			1	3
Miscellaneous	4	8	5	10
Totals.....	288	359	311	333

Much of the honor for this result belongs to Laboulaye, who once told me that when women first began to apply for admission to the Paris Medical School, the matter was referred to him for resolution by the then minister of public instruction. In his report Laboulaye recommended that if women were ready to pass the same examinations as men they be granted the same privileges as men. This rule was accepted, and has been applied ever since pretty generally throughout the whole French state school system.³

Though many students in the above table are foreigners, the number of Frenchwomen pursuing studies in the universities is steadily on the increase, a result due in large measure to the existence of the girls' *lycées*. Thus, in 1892 there were eighteen Frenchwomen in the Paris Medical School alone, and five pursuing scientific studies, while in the course in letters Frenchwomen were in a great majority among the female students, there being 82 French to 15 foreigners. Commenting on these figures, a leading Paris paper⁴ said: "It would seem, therefore, that women have definitely conquered a place in our universities. It is a revolution in our country accomplished pacifically, while women have been knocking in vain for years at the doors of the German universities."

Theodore Stanton.

The Question of Sex in Teachers' Salaries.

MR. M. BABCOCK, Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Public Schools of San Francisco, writes to us as follows: "In the JUNE CENTURY, St. Paul is spoken of as the first city providing for equal pay for women and men teachers doing the same work. For the last nineteen years California has had a law recognizing the same principle. It reads as follows: 'Females employed as teachers in the public schools of this State shall, in all cases, receive the same compensation as is allowed to male teachers for like services, when holding the same grade certificates.'"

Mr. Babcock incloses a printed list of the schedule of salaries paid in the San Francisco school department in accordance with the above provision.

cles in France may be mentioned here. Last winter a graduate of the Paris Medical School, Dr. Blanche Edwards-Pillet, was made professor at the School for the Training of Male and Female Nurses in the Bicêtre Hospital. A few weeks later, Mlle. Jeanne Chauvin, LL. B., a graduate of the Paris Law School, was appointed to the chair of Domestic Law and Economy in the girls' *lycées* of Paris. Miss Klumpke—an American, by the way—was received by the late Admiral Mouchez as a special student in celestial mathematics, and appointed by him, while director of the Paris Observatory, head of the Bureau of Measurements, which important post she still fills with marked distinction.

⁴ "Le Temps," February 10, 1892.

¹ In his report on his own bill, laid before the Chamber of Deputies in 1879, and which fills one hundred pages, the account of female education in the United States comes first, and opens with these words: "No country began earlier nor has done more or better than the American republic." This report, and several other volumes—some of them quite rare—bearing on woman's education in France, and used in the preparation of this letter, have been deposited in the library of Cornell University.

² Director of Primary Instruction at the Department of Public Instruction, and one of the leading authorities in France on pedagogics.

³ One or two recent and rather remarkable examples of the very liberal way in which women are treated in official educational cir-