

ist in this last month of November; its proprietors and chief editors, Sydney Sonnino and fraternity, set on foot and for several years maintained the best weekly paper ever seen in Italy, the *Rassegna Settimanale*, in which social questions were impartially treated from a practical, scientific, and philosophical point of view. Now, more than ever, such a newspaper is a desideratum in Italy, since in every town or city a so-called social newspaper appears and disappears, leaving no useful trace behind it. I am not, as may seem, in a pessimist mood, nor at all inclined to judge newspapers from a party point of view; nay, I must confess my weakness for the genus and the various species. American and English papers I read with delight. But in Italy hunger and dearth are words all too meek: there is an absolute famine of literary or real political food. Taking daily papers as a whole, the *Secolo* of Milan, which has a circulation of 80,000 copies, has the merit of giving you the news of the day within the twenty-four hours; but the only daily paper worth reading is the old *Unità Cattolica* of Turin, still edited by Don Margotto, the most sceptical of mortals and the phoenix of journalists. A subscriber I am not nor have ever been—it would require more moral courage than I possess to have the organ of that thorough-going, constant champion of the temporal power of the papacy addressed to my humble dwelling daily; but when there is a chance of reading it round the corner, I confess to devouring it surreptitiously, and feeling satisfied after so doing. It gives you general news, reports the doings and sayings of friends and foes; some of its articles on non-religious questions are admirable, and for memory of dates, facts, episodes, and anecdotes, Don Margotto is unsurpassed; his only rival in the times gone by was Maurizio Quadrio, editor of the *Unità Italiana*.

This is not a satisfactory report, but, believe me, it is as conscientious as it is painful to the writer. If, passing from the daily to the periodical press, I could give a brighter picture, there would be due compensation, but this is not the case. From 1820 to 1860 I doubt whether any country in Europe possessed a more splendid periodical press than did Italy. Think of the old *Politecnico* under Carlo Cattaneo, issued between the years 1837 and 1849, then reissued in 1860, and continued until the death of that great philosopher and political economist. In that monthly review every question, great or small, was exhaustively treated—the theology and philosophy of Rosmini and Romagnosi and Ferrari, political economy from Adam Smith to Stuart Mill, agriculture from Arthur Young to Ricasoli and Riddolfi, the state of India and British treatment of Ireland (anent which country Cattaneo's prophecies are, alas, all too well fulfilled); the United States with her civil war; railroads, gas-lighting, popular armament, rotation of crops, the necessities of Italy of those days. Or take, if you prefer, a more conservative organ, the *Crepuscolo*, which saw the light, lived and died under the Austrian régime between 1849 and 1859. That was a weekly paper, a star of first magnitude, visible during the darkest night. Then, to come to more prosaic times, think of the *Vecchia Antologia*, under the bad old grand-dukes, and even the *Nuova Antologia* until a few years since, never equal to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, still keeping pace with it at a respectful distance. But now, if you except Ruggiero Bonghi's uniformly excellent articles, a rare contribution from Pasquale Villari, and an annual sonnet or literary gem from Giosuè Carducci, the *Nuova Antologia* is but a shadow of its former self.

The number of journals subsidized by the Government and the sum paid it is impossible to state. That is a secret known only to the handler of the secret-service funds; but the fact, which is

incontestable, does not diminish the discredit into which the press has gradually fallen. J. W. M.

#### A NEW VIEW OF LA BRUYÈRE.

PARIS, December 17, 1886.

M. ÉTIENNE ALLAIRE has just published two large octavo volumes on La Bruyère. It is not long since M. Servois undertook a study of our great moralist, which found a place in Hachette's magnificent collection of "Les grands écrivains de la France." M. Servois carefully collected all the original documents concerning the life of La Bruyère. M. Allaire has had peculiar opportunities. He was chosen in 1866 as preceptor of the young Duc de Guise, the second son of the Duc d'Aumale, and he remained a few years at Twickenham, where he had access to the archives of the House of Condé. He used the documents which he found there as well as in the rich library of the Duc d'Aumale, and compared them with other well-known documents—Dangeau's 'Journal,' the Memoirs of the Marquis de Sourches, those of Saint-Simon, etc.—and he finally made for himself a sort of theory of the 'Caractères,' which I must explain.

There were in the lifetime of La Bruyère eight successive editions of the 'Caractères.' Each new edition contained some new characters, portraits, maxims, spread somewhat in disorder among the old ones; each of these additions was the result of La Bruyère's mental experience during a certain period of time; and M. Allaire, if I understand his plan, has tried to explain these successive additions by the history of the time. He sees in them a sort of mirror of events, a mirror which gives at times a confused light, but which is nevertheless faithful. Surely, the mind of La Bruyère, living as he did in the atmosphere of the court, could not but receive strong and constant impressions; it remains, however, to discern how much in these various *strata* of thought, if the word may be allowed, which are found in his numerous editions is subjective and how much is objective—how much is the lesson of the time and how much must be looked upon as the mere individual caprice of a creative mind. This was a very delicate work to perform, one which required the insight of the moralist as much as the knowledge of the historian.

M. Guillaume Guizot has planned an edition of Montaigne, in which the additions of the second and of the third part are marked with some visible sign, so as to show the progress of Montaigne's ideas; and he has also undertaken to explain the development of the philosophy of Montaigne in connection with the history of his time. His work is not yet finished. M. Allaire's task was easier, since there are as many as eight original editions of La Bruyère: a mathematician would say that the law of a curve is easier to find when you know many points of it. The additions in La Bruyère become more and more numerous: "From the fourth edition to the eighth," says M. Allaire, "that is to say, from 1688 to 1694, there is no year during which the follies of his contemporaries do not furnish him elements for a new volume. The fourth, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh, the eighth, all have very important additions, wherein we see a reflex of the moral facts of which La Bruyère was an attentive witness, and of the historical facts of which he was an authoritative judge. He places under our eyes not only literary events of the highest interest, such as the quarrel of the ancients and of the moderns, the criticism of 'Tartuffe,' the triumph of 'Esther,' and the fall of 'Athale'; but also political events of the highest gravity, such as the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the diplomacy of the Prince of Orange, the English Revolution, the League of Augsburg. . . . In our eyes La

Bruyère is no less remarkable as a historian than as a moralist."

M. Allaire has not quite followed the plan which I set forth; he does not follow La Bruyère from edition to edition. The thread of his study is not chiefly literary, it is chiefly historical; he tells in the most minute details the history of the times, and, when the moment comes for a criticism or a philosophical maxim, instead of making it himself, he introduces a sentence from La Bruyère. His work might be called the History of the Court of Louis XIV., with a perpetual commentary by La Bruyère. Such a method is open to criticism; it is very arbitrary, it is not often possible to see a distinct connection between the events and the reflections of La Bruyère, which have a character of great generality. It would be, I do not say easy, but possible, to write a history of Louis XIV. intermixed with constant citations from Pascal, or from any other great moralist. At the foot of each page you see notes giving references to such or such a chapter of the 'Caractères,' to such or such numbers of these chapters. I observe, for instance, on page 25 of the first volume of M. Allaire's work as many as eight such notes, which means that there are on the page as many as eight citations from La Bruyère; on page 41 I find also eight such notes; there is hardly a page where such a note is not found.

La Bruyère was the witness of very extraordinary events, and he lived with very extraordinary people; but his position did not allow him to make any clear allusions. We shall not repeat here the biographical details given by M. Servois about his first years and his youth; we will only follow him after he entered the family of Condé. He was attached, on Bossuet's recommendation, to the Duc de Bourbon, the grandson of the Grand Condé. M. le Prince, as the latter was called, wished to make a hero or at least a good soldier of this grandson. M. le Duc (such was the name given to Condé's son, the father of La Bruyère's pupil) was less ambitious: he merely wished to make of the Duc de Bourbon a perfect courtier: he was very anxious to marry him to Mlle. de Nantes, a daughter of Louis XIV. and of Mme. de Montespan, since a marriage with a *légitimée* would give the young Prince the *grandes entrées*—that is, free access to the King in his private apartment and at all hours. Gourville, who was the general intendant and factotum of the House of Condé (he left very curious memoirs), entered into these plans. So did Mme. de Maintenon, who was on the point of secretly marrying the King. The match was decided at Chantilly, between Louis XIV. and Condé, though the Duc de Bourbon was only fifteen years old. La Bruyère entered upon his functions on the 15th of August, 1684. The Great Condé had himself traced the programme of the education of the young Prince. M. Allaire enters into very interesting details on this subject, and describes minutely the entourage of the Duc de Bourbon and the life of the little court at Chantilly, and afterwards of the Hôtel de Condé in Paris. La Bruyère followed the Duc de Bourbon everywhere, trying to teach him history, to explain to him the Cartesian philosophy. Such subjects were somewhat too serious for the young Prince, and his preceptor soon found that the Duc de Bourbon, like his father, M. le Duc, would be very different from the Grand Condé.

The death of the last-named gives M. Allaire an occasion to speak of a well-known tradition, which was carefully concealed for a long time from those who did not belong to the great House of Condé. Tallemant des Réaux says distinctly: "The Marshal de Brézé married the sister of the Cardinal de Richelieu, then Bishop of Luçon. The woman was mad; she died in confinement."

Nobody ever denied this fact. From this marriage came two children, one of whom, Claire Clémence de Maillé-Brézé, married the Great Condé (February 7, 1641). Condé had in vain striven against his father, who was anxious to secure the good will of the great Cardinal, and obliged his son to contract this marriage. Condé never ceased to protest that he had never given his consent to this union except under fear of the violence of the Cardinal and out of deference to the absolute wish of his father. The Princess of Condé was only thirteen years old when she was married, and still played with her dolls; she became in time a lively brunette. A child was born a little while after the battle of Rocroy; two others were born afterwards, but died young. Condé, however, neglected his wife. He was convinced that his marriage was a blot on his character; he could not reconcile himself to it. The Princess was much affected by his desertion, and she became a monomaniac. The secret was well kept and her mania remained unknown. M. Allaire cites, however, a report of an English political agent, taken from the State Paper Office (published in an 'Essay on the Life of the Great Condé,' by Lord Mahon, 1842), which tells of an incident that allowed Condé to shut up his wife with the consent of the King. "La Bruyère," says M. Allaire, "speaks of this affair as one of those curious cases which he does not understand; 'Is it, on account of the secret or from an hypochondriac taste, that one woman loves a servant; another woman a monk, and Dorinne her doctor?' La Bruyère adds: 'For a woman of the world, a gardener is a gardener, a mason is a mason; for some women who live in great retirement, a gardener is a man, a mason is a man. Everything is temptation for those who fear temptation.'" I ask here, By what right does M. Allaire apply this passage to the case of the Princess of Condé? It is enough for him that such an application could be made, but was it really made by the author of the 'Characters'?

The Princess became incurable; she was kept in a park at Châteauroux in Berri, where she was treated with care, and was surrounded with devoted servants. Her son, Henri Jules de Bourbon, called M. le Duc, was never shut up, but he was very eccentric, very irrational; for a moment he excited great hopes in his father, but he was a failure. He never could learn the first elements of the art of war; he had no equilibrium, no balance; he was light, irrational, full of caprices; he was incoherent, dissipated. As long as Condé lived, he was kept within bounds; after his father's death M. le Duc became uncontrollable, and he had frequently terrible fits of anger, which, says Saint-Simon, resembled at the same time epilepsy and apoplexy. He died in one of these fits, at the age of forty-two, in full carnival, making horrible grimaces.

Condé had always had great fears of his son, seeing in him the temper of his mother, and it was for this reason that he took such great care of the education of his grandson, the Duc de Bourbon, and placed near him such men as La Bruyère. It was also to please his son, and to keep him contented, that he consented to the marriage of the Duc de Bourbon with Mlle. de Nantes, the daughter *légitimée* of Louis XIV. and of Mme. de Montespan, though he saw the vice of such an alliance; he hoped, also, to bring fresh blood into his family, and to counteract the influence of the blood of the Brézés. He showed great affection for the young Duchess, who was amiable, sensible, who led a regular life, and who protected her husband against the evil influences of the little court of the Dauphin.

After the death of Condé, La Bruyère remained attached to the Duke and Duchess of Bourbon, with the functions of gentleman in waiting. The

leisure of his new life gave him time to finish his 'Characters.' He read his work to a few friends, and among them to Boileau, and, after some hesitation, took it to the printer. The book had immediately a great success, especially in the ranks of the high clergy. The pious Catholics understood at once the scheme of the work, which only shows what is false and ridiculous in the world in order to bring the mind of man into the higher atmosphere of truth. Bussy-Rabutin, who was a pure *mondain*, wrote, however, a charming letter on the book, praised it, and expressed a great desire to make the acquaintance of the author. M. le Prince (since the death of Condé M. le Duc had assumed this name) did not much admire the 'Caractères,' and simply approved of them. The success of the first three editions added a little lustre to the House of Condé. La Bruyère was one of his gentlemen; he was proud but unselfish, unambitious; perhaps the Prince could make some use of his talents and of his good will.

The success of his 'Caractères' was a great encouragement to La Bruyère; and it may be said that the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh editions form altogether a new work, and the most important. In these editions La Bruyère touched boldly some of the most important questions, he passed in review all classes of society, he spoke of the people, he deplored war, he showed the advantages of good government, he prophesied revolution, he described the follies of the court and of the world, he entered into the highest philosophical problems, he gave the history of his own soul, his illusions in regard to life, love, glory. His work had come to its present state of perfection (the word perfection is not too strong) when he died on the 11th of May, 1696, at Versailles, at the moment when he was preparing a ninth edition, which had no additions, but only a few corrections.

## Correspondence.

### RELIGIOUS STATISTICS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: To any one who has had experience, as a scribe of a local conference, in gathering the religious statistics from the individual churches, your recent article on "Religious Statistics" is calculated to provoke a smile. You object to the simple denials of your assertions by the *Independent*, and call for specific proofs, though it is hard to see why the denials of a paper familiar with religious matters are not all that is called for in reply to the assertions of a paper not familiar with them, till those assertions are supported by some specific proof. In my own denomination (Congregational), and I suppose in others, it is customary to apportion the amount to be raised for benevolences and the expenses of our denominational machinery among the churches in proportion to their membership; and the pressure which is felt by the churches is toward reporting the membership as small as possible. But this is a point on which minute investigation is necessary to reach any results which can be put into figures. When, however, you say, "The lists of membership given in denominational year-books are notoriously inflated, as are also the returns of church benevolences," you in the latter clause get into the range of figures ready to hand; and a slight examination of the last (or any other) Congregational Year-Book will show how wide of the truth your statement is, at least so far as the Congregational churches are concerned.

Thus, according to our last Year-Book (*cf.* p. 210 with pp. 43-53), the amount which the churches

report as given the preceding year to foreign missions is \$302,395.19, while our Board of Foreign Missions actually received in donations from the living \$428,769.98. The donations to the American Missionary Association were \$191,698.35, of which only \$114,283.36 got into the church reports. The cash receipts of our Home Missionary Society and New West Education Commission were \$500,237.81 besides over \$50,000 in supplies; but the church reports include only \$279,433.40. In this last case, but not in the others, legacies are included in the receipts; but legacies, as well as supplies not in cash, are often included in church reports, and may correctly be so included.

These figures certainly do not show that "the returns of church benevolences are inflated," and would seem sufficient till you have something besides assertions to offer on the other side. As sometimes the total is reported without specifying the separate causes, the column of "Total Benevolences" is more nearly complete; though this column (which includes all gifts to local and undenominational causes) is far below the facts.

Respectfully yours,  
E. W. MILLER.  
BIG RAPIDS, MICH., December 25, 1886.

[The trouble with Mr. Miller seems to be the same as is the case with the *Independent*, not seeing that ignorance, however extensive, must always be of less value than knowledge even if limited. What he has to urge against the main contention of our article, he admits to be of little consequence. We do not know why the conference to which he refers did not follow the usual practice of going on the basis of the last reported membership of the churches. But the Congregationalists are especially weak in the matter of statistics, as we shall see. At any rate, we presume that Mr. Miller would assign no more weight to his exceptional experience, probably among missionary churches, than to the remarkable argument of the *Independent*—the only one it has thus far made use of—to the effect that there can be no inflation of the statistics of church membership, because the one denomination that investigated its rolls found that its figures had been decidedly inflated.]

Our correspondent contents himself with combating an incidental and entirely subordinate remark of ours—a single clause, in fact, of the whole article. Now we make no boast of being "familiar with religious matters," but it would be a very slight familiarity which could not show that Mr. Miller's figures are misleading and worthless. Why did he not read, or, if he read, why did he not believe, the statements of the editors of the Congregational Year-Book appended to their summaries of church benevolences? They say (p. 211, Notes 3 and 4): "The amounts reported above for the specific objects of benevolence are such as are reported by the State organizations and are below facts. They are inserted as indicating proportions, but are not worth adding up. It will be seen that the reports are very imperfect. Many churches make no report." Mr. Miller seems to have thought that such confessedly untrustworthy figures were not only "worth adding up" (they are not added up in the Year-Book, it should be understood), but also worth basing a serious argument upon. We see but one possible excuse for him. If he meant to argue that the benevolent returns of Congregational churches are not inflated because there are no returns at all deserving the