

courses of Malta. At the present time an important section of educated Maltese opinion is tending to an unthinking adoption of some of the worst features of modern English 'progressive' thought, resulting in an increased materialism of outlook and a deplorable hostility to the classical humanities and even an attempt to reduce the time devoted in the University to the teaching of Catholic philosophy to lay students.

On the other side some very encouraging signs are appearing of a general realisation among the really Catholic-minded Maltese that reforms are necessary and urgent if the Catholic traditions of the island are to be preserved and strengthened. The University Catholic Guild under the leadership of its admirable chaplain, who is also Professor of Philosophy, and the Malta Catholic Social Guild, which is largely composed of University students and graduates, are doing some very good work. There is also a movement supported by some of the best and most Catholic-minded of the Professors for the introduction of courses in professional ethics and the foundation of a Chair of Catholic Sociology. It is to be hoped that after the war Catholics in English Universities will do their best to establish the closest possible contact with this new movement of Catholic life in the University of Malta. Maltese clergy, graduates and students will be very eager for their help and co-operation, as long as they do not feel that it is likely to lead to a wholesale and unintelligent substitution of English forms of Catholic thought and activity for those traditional in Malta and suited to the character of the people.

A. H. ARMSTRONG.

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LILLE

LILLE was at one time the capital of Flanders, and from the early Middle Ages has held an important place in both the religious and military history first of Flanders, then of France. In the early nineteenth century it became the centre of a great industrial area, largely due to its climate and to the coal and iron deposits in its neighbourhood. The nearest parallel that one can find in the rise of industrialism in England is Lancashire, and one may well call the department of the Nord, including as it does Lille, Roubaix, Tourcoing, Fives, Bethune and Lens, the Lancashire of France.

Due to the efforts of a few industrialists and manufacturers, a beginning was made in 1874 with a Catholic University; subscrip-

tions poured in, so that in 1875 the four faculties of law, science, letters and medicine were inaugurated. These, with a more recent addition of a faculty of theology, have remained the nucleus of the University, which is usually styled the *Facultés Libres* to distinguish it from the secular *Facultés d'Etat*. It is of interest that as early as 1897, following the lead of Oxford and Cambridge, University Extension lectures were established throughout the regions around the city. Perhaps the most striking manifestation of these was the annual *Ecole Normale des dirigeants ouvriers chrétiens*, which lasted a fortnight, was attended by the leaders of the Christian working class movements of the whole of the north of France and was addressed by professors from the Catholic University.

It was only natural that the University, set in the midst of an industrial area, should specialise in technical subjects; and there were founded successively an institute of higher industrial studies, and a school of industrial arts and crafts. Later came a department of Social Service and a school of Journalism. Nor was the theoretical side neglected, and in 1894 with the approbation and encouragement of Pope Leo XIII. there was founded the School of Social and Political Science. Here the study of Catholic sociology went on apace, inspired by the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and aided by practical experience. The School was fortunate in having as its Director one whose name is intimately bound up with the progress of Catholic social thought in France, M. Eugène Duthoit. His name is not unknown to students of Catholic teaching on the social question, because as permanent president of the *Semaine Sociale de France* he has been the recipient each year of a letter from the Cardinal Secretary of State which has appreciably advanced the directives first given by Leo XIII.

During the years of the First German War the University suffered greatly as Lille was in occupied territory almost from the outset of the conflict. That it was restored to more than its former glory was chiefly due to the efforts of one of its most illustrious alumni, the Abbé Ernest Dimnet, since 1938 honorary professor of English Literature, who toured the United States of America preaching and lecturing on behalf of his stricken Alma Mater. Since 1919 it has grown in numbers and influence, drawing students from many of the European¹ countries and from all over France. To enrol, it is necessary to have passed the *Baccalaureat* or an equivalent examina-

¹ And indeed from other continents too. The writer remembers with pleasure hearing a Chinese Franciscan defending a doctorate thesis on 'The Social and Political Philosophy of Confucianism.'

tion; the University grants certificates, diplomas and doctorates in the various faculties, and prepares its students for the State examinations, such as the *Licence* and the special Diploma for Social Service Workers.

In a symposium, it is permitted perhaps to dwell on some special features of the University which distinguish it from others and which are indeed unique. Therefore we return to the School of Social and Political Science. From its earliest days it has preserved a close connection with the various Catholic vocational organisations, both of employers and of workers, in local industry and has never been in any danger of becoming merely academic. Priests have always been numbered among the students in every faculty (e.g. a special Summer Course for missionaries in the School of Tropical Medicine was attended by priests from many of the religious orders), but as the need arose for more and more priests to act as directors of social secretariats and moral advisers to Trade Unions, it was thought necessary to begin some special form of training for such priests. The Holy See had already praised Bishops who assigned priests, called Missionaries of Labour, to these duties in their dioceses. As a result of a direct appeal from the Sacred Congregation of the Council, there was founded in November, 1932, the School for Missionaries of Labour. Since that date it has welcomed priests from the Americas, Portugal, Austria, Spain, Czechoslovakia, England and Poland, as well as from many of the French dioceses. There they are given a training which is at once theoretical and practical, the former in the School of Political and Social Science, the latter in the many social works with which the diocese of Lille abounds.

It is impossible to say what is the position of the University at present, for once again it is in the heart of occupied territory. Some of the professors are now in Canada or the United States, but the majority if still at large are awaiting the day of France's resurrection. When that day comes the Catholic University of Lille will once again have a large part both in social progress and in the advance of learning in the Catholic world.

JOHN FITZSIMONS,
Missionary of Labour.