

ence of the Normal schools, whose pupils, it should be added, had already labored with marked success in several parts of the district.

The monetary affairs were generally managed in a satisfactory manner, a few municipalities excepted.

The total number of scholars in the district was 7475.

(To be continued.)

### Notices of Books and Publications.

**VIENNET.**—*La Franciade, poème en dix chants, précédé d'une introduction par M. Jules Janin.* Paris, 1863.—1 vol. 12mo.

A critical review of this bold and novel attempt at an epic appears in the *Revue de l'Instruction Publique*. It is from the pen of M. Génvez, who is more favorably disposed towards the work than the other critics. The reviewer concludes as follows: "What we can say with assurance is that the *Franciade* did not fatigue us, while it surprised and bore us along irresistibly. It has fine descriptions of places and battles, eloquent speeches, and stirring scenes; it moves quickly and—a rare thing in these days—it has a commencement, a middle and an end—a starting point, a course, an aim. I boldly affirm that the third canto is truly epic. But what has kept us in a continual state of excitement is the sustained fire of the octogenary poet."

**DE PEINUSQUE.**—*Recueil de poésies par M. Ad. de Peinusque.* Paris, 1863—18mo, vi 336 pp.

Several of these poems were written on Canadian subjects, or during the sojourn of the author in this country. Those acquainted with French Canadian literature will remember *Les Couleurs du Canada* and *Stad iconé*. After more serious study and the publication of his compared history of the French and Spanish literatures M. de Peinusque had devoted himself with increased energy to the muse, and it was in his last moments that he prepared the present volume for publication—a work which he did not live to see accomplished.

**LE FOYER CANADIEN.** The numbers for August, September and October have just appeared together. They contain the conclusion of the remarkable biographical study on Bishop Ple-sis, by the Rev. abbé Ferand, and poetry which the editors believe they can rightly attribute to the late Mr. Auguste Soulard.

**LES BEAUX ARTS, journal littéraire des arts, des sciences et de l'industrie.** Boucher et Manseau, Publishers, Montreal.

This pretty periodical, which has now reached its sixth number, usually contains two, and sometimes four, pages of music and six pages of letter-press. Besides the monthly summary and miscellany, the present issue contains an interesting sketch of the life of Paganini with anecdotes, poetry and critical essays.

**NEVEU.**—"Exercises on the French past participles," by M. Bonneau adapted for the use of English students, by G. A. Neveu. 32 pp. 12vo. London, Roland.

The past participle is the stumbling block in French grammar. It is a very great difficulty to French scholars themselves; and without the use of a special treatise, foreigners could not expect to overcome it. Bonneau's works on grammar are among the best that have been recently published in France, and the adaptation of his exercises on the participles to the use of English students will, we have no doubt, prove of great advantage to them.

**DAREY.**—"The Student's Companion or Elementary Lessons and Exercises in translating from English into French," rearranged and enlarged, by Professor P. J. Darey, M. A., p. 143, 18mo. Montreal, Miller.

The want of a small, well arranged Manual, as a text-book in teaching French to English pupils, had for a long time been felt by Professor Darey, who has charge of that department in the McGill Normal School. Having at last met with the "Young Student's Companion," published at Philadelphia in 1853, he found that, with a few modifications, this book would answer the purpose. Having used it himself with great satisfaction, he has prepared this new and improved edition, which in our opinion will be most valuable in assisting students to overcome the many difficulties existing in the translation of English into French.

**ASCHER.**—"Voices from the Hearth," a collection of verses, by Isidore G. Ascher, B. C. L., 168 p. 12mo. Montreal; Lovell—New York; Appleton.

Most of the poetry contained in this neat little volume has been already published in the Montreal newspapers—some in this jour-

nal. We give a few specimens selected from among the pieces which we think may interest our readers.

In perusing the book, every one will be struck with the absence of any allusion to Our Redeemer, or to any subject connected with the Christian faith. "The traveller and the tree," a parable from the Talmud, "Esther" and the verses to the memory of Lady Montefiore with an Hebraic epigraph will account for this, by revealing the fact that the author stands altogether by the Old Testament—by that creed which the Lower Canadian legislature had, before the Union, and in advance of that of any other country, relieved from all political disabilities.

Much talent and a great facility for variety of style is displayed in the work. "Pygmalion", among other poems, shews a remarkable depth and originality of thought, coupled with great vigour of expression. "False," "Who care?" and "Merchandize," prove that the author, when in a satirical mood, can make a formidable use of the Juvenalian whip; while most of the other poems are of the sweetest elegiac style.

"Saul," by Mr. Hevyssege, the two volumes recently published by Mr. Sang-ter, and the charming poems of Mrs. Leprohon together with this volume, already form a nucleus of Anglo-Canadian poetry which is not to be despised; we hope the author will add to our literature by other and equally valuable contributions.

The following remarks on lyrical poetry are clipped from Mr. Ascher's preface: they deserve the attention of our readers.

Now, my interview with this sternly-visaged acquaintance has suggested me a few thoughts regarding lyrical poetry and its influence—which I shall endeavor to embody in plain prose, instead of in measured couplets.

It is impossible to give an exhaustive definition of minor poems. They may be comprised under the names of ballads, legends, songs, odes, hymns, and lyrics. They are nearly all distinguished by brevity, and generally turn on an emotion, thought, incident, or event. Mr. Giles happily characterizes them, when he remarks that "a simple song is like a compressed drama; and within the circle of these songs we have impulses from every stage of life, from the perturbations of youth to the chills of age." All true minor poems, or we shall call them lyrics—for this word presupposes that which contributes to their perfection, namely melody—must be spontaneous, and therefore natural. The writer must feel his thought before giving it expression. Artifice of words, pomp of metaphor, add to its beauty, but it is the *virida vis animi* thrown into it, which gives it vitality and makes it enduring. Consequently, all favorite lyrics do not, as we are apt to suppose, owe their success to the caprice of the world, or to the fame of their authors. "The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna" is familiar to all, but I am not aware that its composer, C. Wolfe, was particularly celebrated as a poet. The certain distinctive excellencies then which, in my opinion, have made minor poems popular, are earnestness and truthfulness. They must not only proceed from the intellect, but also flow from the heart. The secret of Lord Byron's fame, is that his thoughts glow with feeling. None of us are in love with his preachings, his morals, philosophy, or morbid views of mankind; but the impassioned melody, and particularly the fervid warmth of his words, awake our sympathies and excite our emotions, until we are apt to exclaim, "O that this genius had possessed the piety of Cowper and the philosophy of Montgomery, and these gentlemen the genius of Byron!"

There is an anecdote related of George II, who being asked to patronize the poets, only cursed them, remarking, that "they were all a set of mechanics." I am afraid his remarks apply to many of our modern wooers of the muse. We have in our midst a deal of vague, misty poetry, which requires a concentration of our faculties to understand and appreciate; fine intellectual mechanical compositions, which might as well have been written in prose. But a true poem, as I comprehend the matter, ought to thrill and arrest the mind on perusing it. Aristotle, more than two thousand years ago, informed us, that a poet must either possess frenzy or art. A minor poem all art is merely "a sad mechanic exercise." A minor poem all frenzy, with little or no art, must reach and move our sensibilities, and thus fulfil the purpose for which it was composed. In my opinion, mediocrity may be tolerated in a poem imbued with real and not sham feeling, in spite of Horace's assertion to the contrary. Thus, good lyrics excite the common heart of humanity, because they contain

"The music to whose tone  
The common pulse of man keeps time,  
In cot or castle's mirth or moan,  
In cold or sunny clime."

Long descriptive, dramatic, or epic poems, from their very length, will only find their fit and few audience. This higher poetry will always prove a joy forever to highly cultivated minds; but lyrics that "have a perfection commensurate with their aim, a finish in proportion to brevity," which are either "simple, sensuous, or passionate," are common to all ages and in all times, and, by awakening man's loftier impulses and purer emotions, "fade not into the light of common day," but, like the soul from which they proceed and the imperishable forms of nature herself, are unchangeable and eternal!