

Notes and Comments.

DR. THOMAS HUNTER, President of the Normal College of the city of New York, has an article on Novel-Reading by girls, in *The Epoch* of Friday, March 18th. He asked the female students, "Who is your favourite author, and what books did you read during the summer vacation?" President Hunter states that the answers received, which will be given in *The Epoch*, "reveal certain facts which parents and teachers should carefully consider."

AT the last meeting of the Toronto University Senate, a motion was made by Prof. Hutton, seconded by Mr. Miller, that the report of the special committee on the amalgamation of matriculation and teachers' examination be adopted. Carried. The effect will be to make common examinations for junior matriculation and second class certificates, and for senior matriculation and first-class certificates. It was decided that a committee be appointed to consider the motion of Mr. Falconbridge, seconded by Prof. Hutton, respecting the creation of a medical school which would occupy a closer relation with the University than those at present in affiliation with it.

CONCERNING the large and constant increase in the population of Germany in general, and that of Prussia in particular, the Royal Prussian Statistical Bureau gives the following figures for 1885. The total population on Dec. 1, 1885, was 28,318,458. The births during the year numbered 1,064,401, the marriages 250,707, and the deaths 716,859. The natural increase, therefore, was 347,542, and the average number of births per 1,000 of population 37.6, of marriages, 16.4, and of deaths, 25.3. These figures, high as they are, as compared with those for England and Wales, show a surplus for the last named country, whose population was 27,499,041, with 894,270 births, 197,743 marriages, and 522,750 deaths, making the actual increase per 1,000 in England and Wales 13.5, as against only 12.3 in Prussia.

A SPECIAL meeting of the Kingston Teachers' Association, of which Mr. R. K. Rowe, formerly of Middlesex, is president, was held recently to discuss whether to advise, (1) That promotions be made annually instead of semi-annually as at present? (2) That the minimum percentage for passing be 66 2-3? (3) That the teachers report on the regular work of the year count for half in estimating the standing of the pupils? (4) That account be taken of spelling and composition in all writing answers? (5) That in all grades more attention be paid to mental arithmetic? (6) That the Part I. class be not taught number beyond 20? (7) That the ability to add and subtract rapidly and accurately without counting be an essential

condition for passing to class II.? (8) That composition be more systematically taught in class II.? (9) That in the Junior Third class no attention be paid to technical grammar, but that more importance be attached to the teaching of composition? (10) That, if it be possible, the only examination for promotion to class V shall be the High School entrance?

THE Rev. J. M. Wellwood, M.A., inspector of schools for the counties of Brandon and Minnedosa, who is at present in New Orleans, writing from that place says: "During the past week I attended a meeting of the school superintendents (inspectors) of the State of Louisiana, held here, and felt that in Manitoba we have much to be thankful for. Its system is far ahead of this in every respect. A few things particularly struck me; first, there is altogether too much politics in their system; if our people are wise they will avoid this. Then 51 per cent. of the people in the state can neither read nor write; of course the coloured people form the greater part of this percentage. Again, teachers are poorly paid, and as a natural consequence their qualifications are poor, and the same is, I fear, true of their superintendents. Talents and qualifications must be paid for anywhere; poor pay means poor work, and this is particularly true of the superintendents here. There are about 60 of them in the state, each receiving \$200 a year, but they are political partisans and pay but little attention to the schools—at least that is their own statement to me. I am satisfied that the same money divided among ten good men would pay the country much better."

SOME good work should be done (says the *St. James's Gazette*) by the new colonial training farm at Hollesley Bay. The course of instruction—including as it does practical carpentry, smith's work, saddlery, engineering, and other things somewhat outside the scope of farming proper—is more comprehensive than that prescribed at Cirencester and its kindred institutions, and as such will prove infinitely more useful. To send a young man out to the colonies to rough it and "pick up things for himself" is all very well; but the one who goes out knowing all about it has a much better chance of success. It is a pity that there are not already more of these colleges, available not only for the well-to-do but for the classes which furnish the bulk of emigrants. The Government cannot see its way to approving a State-directed colonization scheme; but it could do no harm in establishing a few training farms to be tenanted by the unfortunate boys who are now sent to industrial schools. A start once made, the expense need not be greater than in bringing up a multitude of tailors and shoemakers, of whom we have already a superabundance; and

the reformed boys would be far more likely to do well, besides relieving their congested country, if, on serving their time, they were set down in a new land far removed from the scenes of their childhood.

A CORRESPONDENT from Glendale sends the following communication:—Two of the greatest evils in rural schools are: (1) irregular attendance of pupils and (2) isolation of teachers from means of improvement, which is apt to cause them to take insufficient interest in their work. It is a difficult matter in all country schools to so classify the pupils as to give each one justice and still have more than one or two in a class, and especially is it so when a teacher is hampered at every attempt to organize a class by irregular attendance of perhaps the very pupils he desires to be present. It is a delicate matter at times with a young teacher to denote pupils of this kind who are not fitted for their class. Now I would like to hear some discussion on this point by our country teachers to whom this must be a glowing evil. Why could not some system of examination be instituted whereby the pupils could be properly classified? Then if the pupils should drop back in their grade, they themselves would suffer the penalty, parents would be induced to send their children more regular in order that they might keep up their grade, the children themselves would take more interest, teachers would be able to see the stand which they took with the others. Too much stress cannot be laid on this last point. Let any of your city teachers, zealous as he may be in the work, but teach one year away from educational influence in a country school where he is visited but twice a year by an inspector, let his pupils attend as irregularly as they usually do and his interest is sure to flag. Our country teachers as a rule are young and have little experience. How are they to know whether their pupils have progressed as well as they might have done where he has no other to compare with? How are parents to know or judge whether their teacher and their school is on a par with their neighbours if no system of grading the schools as a body is instituted? I know of schools in Ontario that take a pride in their standing and whose pupils and teachers take a pride in maintaining that standard. I would not for a moment support a cram system of education, and, in fact, would emphatically condemn it; but I am sure there are examiners in Manitoba who can assign questions that would search out genuine training. There is, therefore, no necessity for a cram system. This is the best means I know of whereby we may, to a certain extent, overcome these two great evils of our rural schools. I leave the matter to rural teachers to discuss, hoping I have not intruded too much.—*Weekly Manitoban*.