

positions of nine in every ten of our British youth save them from this fate. There is nothing the average school-boy is in less danger of than of becoming a text-book in knickerbockers. The pitiless shower of facts that his instructors pour upon him may confuse his mind, but they do not dwell there. He dismisses all thought of them as soon as he has exchanged the school-room for the cricket-field; and it is only as examination time draws near that he begins to make some uncertain and desultory efforts to recall whether it is London or Oxford University that tradition credits King Alfred with having founded, and whether the confusion of tongues took place at Bethel or at Babel. It is to be feared that he seldom succeeds in satisfying himself on these or other points; and the ingenious hypotheses on which he ventures when the sheet of examination questions is actually before him generally fall very far short indeed of affording satisfaction to his examiners. Treated as he is apt to treat them, facts are never hard or dry. A harmless simply-worded question concerning the delta of the Nile has been known to extract from him the information that "It is that part where the river falls into its own mouth;" and he has proved capable of citing, as one of the most remarkable of ancient Egyptian customs, that "as soon as a child was born it was immediately thrown into the Nile." He has declared guano to be a fruit from Brazil, and macaroni a kind of small fish sold in Spain. At one time he has achieved distinction for himself by declaring a monsoon to be "a very contrary wind, which blows twelve months in one direction and then twelve months in another;" and again by characterizing a delta as "a kind of swamp, formed after avalanches have fallen from mountains and the sun has melted them." It does not matter whether he is dealing

with history or geography, with dead languages or living, with Scripture or science, there is always room for him to blunder, and, outside the domains of arithmetic, to be amusing. He has been known to define a postulate as "an untruth assumed," and to refer to matrimony as "essentially necessary to salvation." When asked how the Good Parliament earned its name, he has replied that it was "because the Parliament were silent"—a view that may be pardoned him in consideration of the events of recent Sessions; and he has inferred popular representation in Parliament to mean, "when they are there sitting for some time, without doing anything that the public in general hear of." He has been found capable of assuming the curse pronounced against Adam to be, "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread, for out of it wast thou taken, and unto it thou shalt return;" and on another occasion of perplexing his examiners with the no less extraordinary version, "Thou shalt eat ashes all the days of thy life." Equally startling is his theory of the doom denounced against the serpent, "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat dust, until thou return unto the ground."

Some of the very happiest of his hits have been forthcoming under the pressure of linguistic tests. Thus we find him offering as a rendering of "*Nigros oculos habent pueri*," "Neither of the boys have eyes," and assuming the English of "*Plus ibi boni mores valent quam alibi bonæ leges*" to be "Rather good-bye good manners than good-bye good laws." He has not been ashamed to construe "*C. J. Cæsar anno sexto decimo vitæ patrem amisit*" as "*C. J. Cæsar loved the Father of Life thirty-six years*," or to translate "*Notre effroi augmenta en voyant le monstre de près*," "Our argument ended in saying the monster had taken too much." Nor has his