

—A new public education law has been promulgated at Constantinople. By article 9 primary instruction is made compulsory for every inhabitant of the Turkish empire. The period of instruction for girls is fixed at from six to ten years of age, and for boys from six to eleven. Under article 10 the magistrates of districts and villages are to keep a register of the names of boys and girls whose age qualified them for instruction, together with those of their parents or guardians. If any of these do not go to school the magistrate is to warn the parent or guardian of his obligation and if after such notice the child is not sent to school within a month, and no valid reason is given for its absence, a fine of from 5 to 100 piastres is to be imposed, according to the means of the parent, and the child is to be taken to school by the authorities. The fines are to be paid into the educational fund. The cases of exemption are, first, when the child is shown to have some constitutional defect; second, when the parent is poor, and would suffer loss from his child being sent to school; third, when the child is employed in agricultural labour at harvest time; fourth, when the distance from the residence of the child to the school is more than half an hour's walk; fifth, when there is no school in the district, or when the school is not sufficiently large to accommodate all the pupils; sixth, when proof is furnished that the child is being educated either at home or in a private school. The primary schools are to be either Mussulmans or Christian, according to the religion which is most prevalent in the district. The higher schools, however, are to receive Mussulmans and Christians indiscriminately. An "Imperial Council for Public Instruction" has been established to see to the due execution of this law. Normal Schools are established for male and female teachers. The studies of the higher primary and preparatory schools include Turkish, Persian, Arabic, French, arithmetic, geography, history, geometry, natural history, and political economy.

—An Ottawa paper says:—

"Notwithstanding the vast strides made during the present century in knowledge and civilization, the amount of crime has not lessened. Indeed there appears some reason to believe that it is on the increase. Morality and the observance of law have not kept pace with the advance of education. There never was a time when the latter received so much attention, when it was so widely diffused, and when such earnest efforts were put forth to make it as good and suited to the wants of every day life, as at present. It is fostered and directed by the Government in almost all civilized countries. It is supported by rates. Teachers are trained for the service, and in this country excellent school houses and school equipments are provided. And yet the fact remains, that to all outward appearance, the criminal class is on the increase rather than diminishing.

"It has long been the theory of the optimists that, the general or universal diffusion of education amongst the people would lead to the disappearance from our midst of mendicancy and crime. Education has become generally diffused, and yet the two great social evils of pauperism and crime still remain. This does not by any means tend to prove that education is a bad or undesirable thing. It merely shows that it does not and cannot accomplish what has been expected of it by some over sanguine enthusiasts. There is evidently some other agency required besides to preserve society from moral corruption."

—The University of Edinburgh has authorized the establishment of separate classes for female medical students, an arrangement not found necessary either in France or America, but agreeable to British habits. This concession is due mainly to the energy and perseverance of Miss S. Jex-Blake, who refused to be driven out of Great Britain to pursue her studies, and, after suffering defeat upon defeat, at last persuaded the Senate of the University to open its lecture-rooms to women.

### Literature.

*The Origin of the Word Avoirdupois.*—It is generally accepted that this term is derived from the French *avoir-du-poids*, (to have weight,) and the French also write it in this manner; but no clue is given by this explanation to the origin of the word, as applied to a class of weights.

We find this term for the first time in the fourteenth century, in an Act of Edward III., (statute I.,) where it is written "averdebois" and "haberdepoids." At first, a certain class of goods was understood thereby; then the weight used for them; and finally, the ordinary weight of commerce. In another Act of Edward III., we read, for instance, "Wool and all kinds of avoirdupois," (that is, avoirdupois-goods.) To these avoirdupois-wares belonged wine and corn. "Averdebois" is met with in more recent times; but all the older forms seem to point to the fact that it originated from the English "average," which meant proportionality, equipoise, poise, (formerly poize, and, in the old French, *poise*,) signifying weight, equilibrium, or balance. To poise (formerly to poize) meant figuratively "to weigh."

The saying, for instance, still prevails, "The weight of a hair will turn the scales between their avoirdupois." Averdupois or avoird-

pois may have been synonymous with average poise, indicating common weight; avoirdupois goods were synonymous with ordinary goods. This derivation seems to be the most natural one; and it is confirmed by the acceptance of the English commission of weights and measures, according to which avoirdupois consists of a corruption of the barbaric Latin word *averia*, which means coarse or common goods, and the French word *poide*, (weight.) The word Troy, for the other kind of weight, is derived from Troja Nova, (New Troy,) a name which was given to London by the monk authors of the middle ages, whose belief it was that this city had been founded by Trojan exiles. Trojan or troy-weight is, therefore, synonymous with London weight.

*Robinson Crusoe.*—The Antiquarian Society of Scotland have received a donation to their museum of two interesting articles, which cannot fail to be attractive, especially to juvenile visitors and all who have read DeFoe's world wide story of "Robinson Crusoe." The relics consist of the sea-chest and a carved cocoanut cup, which were the property of Alexander Selkirk, the prototype of Robinson Crusoe. These were with him in his solitary residence on Juan Fernandez, and were brought home with him when taken off the island by Captain Woodes Rogers. They were used by Selkirk while he lived in Largo after his return to his native place. The chest contained his clothes, etc., and when he went off from Largo was left with his descendants, with whom it and the cup remained till the death of one of them a few years ago, when they were sold to a gentleman in London. They were recently placed in the hands of Mr. Chapman, of Hanover Street, for disposal, and have been purchased by Sir David Baxter, who, with his usual generosity, has presented them to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. The chest is made of a species of mahogany, and has Selkirk's initials rudely carved on it, and what seems to have been his number in the ship. The cup was carved by Selkirk while on the island, and was mounted in silver at one time; but having been carried off by a pedler, for some months no trace of it could be got, till it was returned from Perth without its silver stem, for which a wooden one has been substituted. The edge has a silver band with an inscription on it. Only three other relics of Selkirk are known to be in existence. His musket is in the possession of a gentleman in Fife, his brown ware can is in Edinburgh, and his walking-stick is in the museum at Coulter Mains.—*Scotsman*.

*Vellum.*—A contemporary discoursing upon this subject, says: "Of the durability of vellum, or parchment, there can be no doubt. It seems to suffer from no liability to decay, as do wood and iron, The Virgil in the Vatican has lasted since the third century, and may last as many years longer. In the Imperial Library of Paris is a Prudentius of about the same date; and in nearly every public library in Europe are manuscripts of ages varying from 800 to 1,300 years. It is curious, in fact, to reflect that, while many noble monasteries are in ruins, and some even hardly to be identified except by the most zealous antiquaries, manuscripts which were ancient before the abbey rose from the level of the ground, are now in good preservation. We might, indeed, so far as durability of vellum is concerned, have been at this day in possession of the entire works of those authors of antiquity whom we now know only by a few fragments. During the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, parchment became excessively scarce and dear. Great estates were sometimes passed from one owner to another by a mere verbal agreement, and the delivery of earth and stone before witnesses. In 1124 the abbot of a monastery in Suffolk could procure no parchment for illuminating a copy of the Bible, and the Bishop of Winton, in 1226, expended five shillings on a small quantity of parchment, at a time when wheat was only two shillings for eight bushels.

—A writer in *Macmillan's Magazine*, after enumerating the inconveniences and injustice which belong to the present state of the international copyright question, thus sums up:

"Now, how should these injuries and scandals be prevented? Diplomats will not be able to do much for us, although several of them, yours as well as ours, are men who love literature. Still we must not look for any signal help from them, unless they are stimulated by the demand of the public on both sides of the water that divides us. It is to the public that I would appeal through you; and I believe that if the American authors, and the American public, would bestir themselves in the matter, they would find that the British authors, and the British public, would be anxious and ready to co-operate with them, and would force upon governments and diplomatists a due consideration of this important matter.

"Why do I say that it is important? For four reasons.

"1. Because the present system, or rather want of system, is injurious to authors, both American and British; especially to the American, for, as I have shown, it tends to suppress him.

"2. Because it is very damaging to literature.