

Pickings from Blue-Books.

As few of our readers can be expected to wade through the volumes now issuing on Secondary education in England, we select one or two extracts which may be interesting and amusing, if not instructive.

Here is a specimen of the spelling of a hopeful, eleven years old—

"The Arabs have all been wandering tribes and have dell in tenests amid the trackls derets which coverer a large porteon of their contry. There erly history is very imperfectly knon. The first event that is wort recording was the birt of Mahomet. This took place at Mecco a satiy on the border of the Read Sea in the year 570 of the Cination era. Till the age of twelve Mahomet was a coaml drive in the dester. He after was spent much of his time in Soloua. His dwelling was a lasme cave weri he pretened to be empolyed in pray and metation. When he was forter yeary old he set up for a prothp."

The spelling of the last word is truly delightful.

"One boy told me," says an Inspector, "that Jehovah was king of Egypt in the time of Moses; another, that there were seven apostles; and the majority of the class did not know which of the apostles betrayed the Lord, and whether the 'olive'—a word constantly recurring in the passage—was an animal, vegetable, or what it was, none could tell."

In another part we learn that,

"Of decimal fractions they knew next to nothing; and I suspect that even the schoolmasters, who confine themselves to teaching commercial arithmetic, would be puzzled with many a division sum in decimals. One indeed disputed the fact that $(\frac{2}{3})^3 = \frac{8}{27}$. Another informed me, with great gravity, that $\frac{2}{3} = .75$, as a fact not generally known!"

"In a Norfolk school, which professed to give instruction in ancient history, I was informed by one boy that Alexander the Great was a king of England, and by another that he was a king of France."

INFLUENCE OF PARENTS.

Perhaps there is no school in the Kingdom, certainly there is none in my district, where the interference of parents is more tolerated than in the Berwick Corporation Academy. At that school, one parent, after threatening to "double up" the rector for correcting his son, actually forbade the boy to attend the rector's classes. The consequence might easily be predicted: "The boys in the rector's classes were the most ignorant and insubordinate I have seen anywhere."

INFLECTION OF VERBS.

"To the question, How is the past tense of verbs found? I have received a vast number of answers like this one: 'By adding d or ed, as sing, sang.' One girl answers the question simply thus: 'More, most.'"

HISTORY.

History is a great point in some girls' schools. Here is a specimen of some of the written answers given to the Inspector's questions. The Inspector says "it would have been easy but tedious to add to the collection"—

Lord Bacon. Henry III. He discovered a great many things in chesmistry, and discovered gunpowder.

Lord Beacon was a celebrated philosopher, and he invented gunpowder.

Sir Thomas Moore. Lord Chancellor of England. Wrote plays, and lived in Henry IIIV. reign.

Sir Thomas More. A poet in the reign of Victoria.

Burke. A navigator.

Burke was an elegant writer, and his works have been universally read.

Geffey Chaucer was born in 1323, died 1400. He has called the father of English poetry, and his works justify this appellation.

Sir. I. Newton, George IV., astronemor.

Dr. Johnson, one of the brightest lumaniries of the 18th century.

Sir. W. Scott flourished in the reign of Elizabeth.

Milton was a celebrated poet. He best poem is Paradise lost and regained. His character is best portrayed in Dryden's celebrated verses—

"Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn;
The force of nature could no further go—
To make a third, she joined the former two

These extracts are from Mr Hammond's report on schools in Northumberland and Norfolk.

We give a specimen of spelling, furnished to us by Mr Stanton, from a school in Devon or Somerset. There were twenty equally bad. We have not space for the original, but some perseverance will enable the reader to make out the meaning.

BY A BOY AGED THIRTEEN, AT AN ENDOWED GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

"He was burred in the church at Cong, and a remarkable circumstance occurred at his funeral. Has the body was being carried to the grave a man who stood on an enemense in a loud voice forbaid the inturnats of the body in a spot in which they discease had unjutsly sease. That very spot he cried lies this sight of my futhers house and I sommon the departed soul the divine trefurnal to answer for the crime. All present were struck by the sollam appical and the mans charge being found to be just he emidatly recieved sadfaction for wrong. William is described by the writters of the time has posessing the sighs and strengt of a gaint. He was turn and revengful but of a commanded spirit. Although very fare from beign one of the best he onduilty was one of the amilest or English monarch."

We cannot afford space for an extract from a leader in the *Times*. It may be sufficient to say, that free competition is spelled "Fhre copetician," and juicy pears, "jusey pairs." Artemus Ward could not have done better.

Here are some beauties culled from various reports:—

HISTORY (FROM A MIDDLE CLASS SCHOOL, BOYS).

Bill of Attainder was passed by Charles I. to pardon rebels. Habeas Corpus, a bill passed by Edward I. to protect a man's body.

National Debt is what we owe other nations, and was intended to be paid off by the South Sea Bubble, but it didn't answer.

It was brought on the nation as the Government had a large debt, but the people did not care about paying it.

Charles I. was a weak man; he was separated from his wife, but in a few years lived together in peace.

There was also taxes called ship-money, to carry on the wars with, and also the great rebellion.

The Duke of Marlborough was killed at V'aterloo.

King Charles I. was beheaded by Bisho, Juxon because he would not let Cromwell be king.

Luther came to England to help Henry VIII. to bring about the Reformation.

GEOGRAPHY.—FROM AN UPPER CLASS GIRLS' SCHOOL (MIDDLE OF THE SCHOOL).

Geography questions in half year's work on the United States, Scotland, and Ireland:—

United States is remarkable for its ruins.

Its population is 3000000,—200,000,2000,000,000.

Each state manages its own affairs, has a Consul-general appointed by the people and a Governor by the Queen.

Each state has a King chosen by the people and a House of Commons and Lords.

The capital of United States is Mexican.

It is governed by a Queen, a Council and 2 representatives.

It is very subject to earthquakes and all the houses are built low in consequence.