

example. Three classes of questions might here be profitably proposed:—1st, In local history; 2nd, Relating to newly discovered facts; 3rd, Deducing from the facts of our text-books the development in civilization of a people, the policy of its rulers, the means they used to carry out the same, and their effects. A fine example of an answer to the first class of questions is Mr. Scudamore's description of the battle of Moravian Town, in vol. I. page 265. Examples of the second class are Quests. 13 and 26. Answers to such as these should give a full account of the discovery, the value of the documentary evidence, and, if relating to a disputed point, a sketch of the controversy. The answer to 26 gives the hint where to look for more; that to 13 was worthless, except as a warning to teachers that text-books sometimes make with Macaulay confident assertions of which the truth is very doubtful. Our recent school-histories are becoming more and more mere repertoires of facts (some not of the facts of the old works, relating solely to bloodshed and battles) requiring the teacher to clothe this skeleton, but to do so he must know the times whereof he speaks. In the hand of one possessed of this knowledge the new books are infinitely better than their predecessors, but where the knowledge is wanting they are not worse, only because such is impossible. The third class of questions would give models of looking beyond the facts, and in doing so of putting flesh on the dry bones. Examples are Quests 12 and 27. Will not contributors consider again, ere wholly neglecting this third class? Answers might well find a place among CONTRIBUTIONS.

"Young Teachers' Queries" still remain to be noticed. We have received many questions, but the answers were very few. Do our teachers lack interest in their profession, or are they afraid of composition, lacking the confidence of training? It looks suspiciously like the latter. We fear the subject has been very generally neglected in our schools. In the Grammar Schools of England pupils formerly were carefully trained in Latin composition, but left to pick up an English style as best they could. Have our Public Schools adopted this system OMITTING THE LATIN?

Although most willing, we may not review the purposes for which many of the problems were proposed. Even at the time of answering we had to forego this. All we may do is again to ask our readers to think out for themselves the fundamental distinction between symbolic arithmetic and algebra, (Ans. to 42); to call the attention of the younger among them to the fact that as a composer may purposely introduce a discord in his music, so a speaker may intentionally

and with an object in view violate a so called grammatical rule, (Ans. to 35); that a word may be correctly parsed in more ways than one, in one and the same sentence, (Ans. to 49); and finally to the meaning of *Prove* as applied to Grammar, Ans. to 51.

To the many contributors to the Desk we return our sincere thanks, and we hope they will continue to give their assistance.

One department of the Desk we purposed opening, but which has hitherto been omitted, shall in future receive attention, the progress, discoveries, and publications, in mathematics. We thought at first to give in the present No. a list of the principal papers and articles published in England during the past year, but after selecting and reselecting we found the list of such astonishing length that we were most unwillingly compelled to omit it. The year 1873 has been exceedingly rich in both pure and applied mathematics, as witness the unusually large number of papers (thirty-four) printed in the proceedings of the London Mathematical Society. Of *Books* the year opened with Maxwell's great physico-mathematical treatise on Electricity and Magnetism, was continued by Salmon (and Cayley's) Higher Plane Curves (nominally a second edition but in reality a new work) and Booth's New Geometrical Methods vol. I, and was crowned by the two volumes of Todhunter's great history of attractions and figure of the earth from Newton to La Place. Kelland and Tait's Quaternions and new editions of Williamson's Differential Calculus, Lloyd's Wave Theory of Light and Tait's Quaternions, all improved and much enlarged. Of elementary works there were published a host; in fact counted along with those in physical science, they would outnumber the novels. One, the "Algebra" in Collins' School Series, is by a Canadian, T. Loudon, Dean of University College Toronto. Of the mathematical publications of the United States, it can only be said that the majority are as usual beneath contempt. The editor has not had the good fortune to meet with a single example of the minority. Strange that a country that could give to England the "Tables of Uranus," published in the Nautical Almanac for 1877 should be content to use mathematical text-books hardly up to those of two centuries ago.

In *Etymology*, G. H. Kitchen has given us a translation of Brachet's Etymological French Dictionary, a small, but valuable work; a new edition of Stratmann's Old English Dictionary has been issued, and one of Bosworth's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary is promised. The great Icelandic-English Dictionary of Cleasby and Vigfusson, has been completed. Is it not strange that while we have such works as this, and Williams' Sanscrit-English,