

Hints and Helps.

THE QUEEN'S ENGLISH.

WE clipped some time ago an article from *The Schoolmaster*, commenting on a book which was published a year or more ago in England, by an author who wrote under the pseudonym of "Anglophil." Some extracts from the articles may yet be useful as well as interesting:—

Having half-excused the talkers, the writer proceeds to remind us that *Litera scripta manet*, and to assert that "it is the writers, not the speakers, who make and mar a language." The book consists very largely of

FAULTY SENTENCES WITH CORRECTIONS,

and the writer justly prides himself upon the number and variety of his examples. We may cull a few samples of the author's method. Thus he deals with sentences containing alternative subjects, one singular and one plural, and the temptation to make the verb agree with the nearer subject, *e. g.*,

One's own room, or two rooms, are really a home.

In choosing his verb, the writer is on the horns of a dilemma, and Anglophil solves the difficulty by re-casting the sentence:

One's own room is really a home; if one has two rooms, so much the better. Before we have turned over many pages, we find the author at war with those terrible pronouns—the cause of shoals of errors. Here is a sample:

"There was scarcely a girl who did not regard the old ladies as their best of friends."

This class of error is easily corrected, but immediately after we are reminded of what is "a felt want"—a singular personal pronoun, corresponding with "their," and applicable to either sex. Thus in the pillory we find:

Putting everyone else at their ease.

Syntax requires "his" or "her" in place of "their," but probably the speaker means both "his" and "her"; the word he requires does not exist, and the poverty of our language must partly excuse his mistake. After more about the pronouns, our author lays down the rule in regard to nouns of multitude—are they singular or plural?

"In deciding whether the former or the latter should be employed, it is necessary to consider whether the idea conveyed by such noun is that of unity or plurality; that is to say, whether the notion of a whole or that of a number is the more prominently presented to the mind by the term used; in the first case the verb and pronoun should be in the singular number, in the second in the plural."

And as typical instances we may quote:

The Government is treating with the Home Rulers.

The crowd were inattentive; part of it were talking and part of it were eating oranges.

"People," we learn, should be used only in the collective sense; in far too many cases it is wrongly used for "persons." The common error of using an objective for a nominative is condemned, *as, e. g.*—

It must have been her (she).

Anglophil shows true instinct in deprecating the undue use of superlatives. He would replace most of our "mosts" by "verys," reserving "most" for full-dress and truly superlative occasions. He is down on another intensitive suffix and would banish "ever" as meaningless from all such sentences as this:

What ever has he done?

After putting us right in the use of "as," "so," "such," and some of their relatives, he lays down a rule about negatives and quasi-negatives that will not be universally accepted. Thus

"I don't intend to stand" should be "I intend not to stand."

If the latter is preferred by the purist, the former

is the more idiomatic, and it is sanctioned by the well-known Latin analogue.

"He says he has not done it"—*negat se fecisse*.—"He denies that he has done it," in other words the negative is attracted into the principal verb.

On the other hand the misuse of "only" is one of the most common and palpable of all our grammatical blunders. Closely akin in the misfortune of misusage are "scarcely," "never," "hardly," "seldom," "even," and others whose proper function is fully illustrated. In the controversy that is waged around "Two first" *v.* "First two" and analogous forms, Anglophil unhesitatingly supports the latter.

FULL JUSTICE IS DONE TO THE PREPOSITIONS, and we have chapters on wrong prepositions, superfluous prepositions, omitted prepositions, and misplaced prepositions. Naturally the verb claims a great many pages, and common errors are corrected; thus the author warns us against the usual "try and" for "try to," as in

I will try to (not and) do all you wish.

Superfluous "theres" are properly excluded, and then we come to sections on "to be," "to have," "to do," past tense and participial forms, and so forth. That classical *crux*, the sequence of the tenses, has its counterpart in English, and well-constructed exercises guide us through the mazes.

THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD

is dealt with very carefully and fully, the general rule being thus perspicuously set forth:

The subjunctive mood, then, exhibits an event or action as contingent, conditional, or uncertain. It is preceded by a conjunction, expressed or implied, and is accompanied by another verb. There is one other very important point to be considered before deciding whether the subjunctive or indicative mood should be used, namely futurity. The subjunctive mood is necessary when these two conditions concur; when the action or event is of a conditional, contingent, or uncertain nature; and when the action or event has reference to a future time. Neither contingency alone, nor futurity alone, permits the use of the subjunctive mood. When contingency and futurity are *not* united in the event or action to be expressed, the indicative mood is required; when they *are* united, the subjunctive.

The examples are numerous and well chosen, and an intelligent study of them may help to lengthen the waning career of the "doubtful" mood.

Question Drawer.

D. G. F.—No. 6 copy book is no doubt meant. But its use is not compulsory. The work may be done in any blank book. The examiners are instructed to make no discrimination.

C. W. J. would like to procure portraits of the successive Governors-General of the Dominion, suitable for the walls of the school-room. We do not know whether or where such portraits can be procured. Does any reader?

L. A. AND OTHERS.—Withrow's History of Canada is probably the largest and fullest single volume of the History of Canada available. Bryce's, somewhat smaller, is also a good work. Either of these can be procured through us or any of the booksellers advertising in our columns.

PANSY.—Copies of the School Law are, we think, on sale at the Education Department. Write also the Deputy Minister of Education, Toronto, for circular giving qualifications for Third-Class Certificates. This will contain Literary Selections. Ask also for circular re Entrance Examinations.

D. N. W.—Write to the Deputy Minister of Education, Toronto, for circular containing Prose and Poetical Selections and all other subjects prescribed for Fifth Class. We are not aware that any notes in these selections have been published, but we will try to have notes on some of them at least in subsequent numbers of the JOURNAL.

IN "Question Drawer" of your last issue of the JOURNAL, an inquirer asks for approximate time an average child should spend in each reader. My experience has been as follows: Part First, 1½ years; Part Second, 1 year; Second, 1 year; Third, 1 year; Fourth, 1½ years. This gives the pupil six years which is about correct, if he attends regularly.—W. H. CLARKE.

SUBSCRIBER asks what are the seven principles of writing? He also wishes us to recommend a work in penmanship. We are not aware that there are just seven principles of writing—no more, no less, nor are we prepared to select any work on penmanship for special recommendation. Perhaps some teacher of penmanship among our readers can throw some light on the subject.

J. W. M.—There are now forty-four States and five Territories in the American Union. There are forty-five County and District Municipalities in Ontario, which is probably what you wish to know. Of these Algoma, Nipissing and Rainy River are Districts, while in several cases two or three counties are united in one municipality, as Lennox and Addington; Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, etc.

E. A. H.—The Commercial Forms, of which at least two examples pertaining to the set in Book-keeping are required for the Public School Leaving Examination, are given in the blank books prepared by R. H. Eldon (Gage & Co.) Toronto. They are such as notes, drafts, cheques, acceptances, bills of exchange, account-sales, etc. It would pay you to buy a good work on book-keeping, such as those generally used in business colleges.

E. A. T. and several others ask us to publish lists of the literary extracts prescribed for Entrance and for Public School Leaving examinations. To keep publishing these from number to number, as they are asked for, would occupy too much space in the JOURNAL. Moreover, it is quite unnecessary to do so, as the circulars containing them may be had on application to the Education Department. Please read the remarks of the Mathematical Editor at the end of his column. We endorse them.

W. G. C.—The following certificates are awarded at the final examination in the School of Pedagogy: High School Assistants and Specialists' Certificates after a session at the school; and First-Class Certificates to candidates who, holding a Second-Class Certificate, and having completed the twenty-first year of their age on or before the close of the session, have had two years' successful experience in a Public School, or who, holding a Second-Class Certificate, have attended a session of the School of Pedagogy.

A. B.—As the Departmental Regulations prescribe for Fifth Form "Bookkeeping, Single and Double Entry," we should suppose that the "ten foolscap pages" of school work should embrace both. Your Inspector can no doubt give you the exact information required. For second question see answer elsewhere in this Drawer. In regard to your third question we have no information save what is given in the Departmental circular. If you have not that, write to the Department for a copy. If this is not clear, apply to the Inspector or to the Deputy Minister of Education. Perhaps your fourth suggestion may be carried out. We do not know whether all the papers are now procurable.

A SUBSCRIBER says that he finds that his Part First and Second Book Classes (presumably French children) although able to read the French exercises in the Bi-lingual readers expressively and fluently, completely fail in the reading of the corresponding English lessons, although considerable effort has been made to assist them in the preparation. It must be borne in mind that to the majority of the French children the English is a new language. They do not know the meanings of the words, and the constructions are strange to them. The essential thing in teaching any new language is to get the pupil as soon as possible into the way of thinking the thought as the people who use that language do, not as we do. This will, of course, require much time and patience. Perhaps some teacher of larger experience in the use of the bi-lingual books may be able to give our correspondent some useful hints. "Subscriber's" other requests will be, as the leaders of the government say, "carefully considered."