

Notes and Comments.

IN Mr. W. J. Robertson's letter, dated 11th Dec., 1886, which appears in our correspondence column in our issue of the 16th December, we regret that several typographical errors occur, the word *test* having been printed *text* in several places.

A WRITER in the *Montreal Star* says "the foundation of all education, from the time a child first begins to learn, is thoroughness. Whatever is attempted must be carried out thoroughly, until the learner becomes master of the subject. Thoroughness is the groundwork of all good habits of mind and a child's mind is as much a bundle of habits as its body. For this purpose it is well to strengthen the memory by insisting upon children learning something by heart every day; it cultivates the retentive powers of the mind, and is a help to spelling accurately, as the eye accustoms itself to the appearance of words."

IN Paris M. Maldant, a civil engineer, has called a meeting says the (English) *Schoolmaster*, for the purpose of creating a lecture room in which an "international and natural language" can be taught. As M. Maldant is a man of a good deal of cleverness and family and personal influence, he has obtained State patronage for his attempt to restore unity to human speech, and hopes to have made good headway by the time the Eiffel Tower of Babel is constructed. The principles of the Revolution, which are of universal application, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man are to be proclaimed there in 1889 in his general tongue. We are evidently getting on!

WHEN men enter college a new era in their life begins. For the first time in all probability they are in a position in which they have to depend on their own resources. It is at this period that those qualities are developed which will characterize their whole lives and acts. As is the student among the fellow students, so will be the man among his fellow men. But remember, that it is not the man who springs into notice as soon as the session opens that will be the most noticed and respected when his college course is over. The quiet unassuming worker will be the man of the final year when the at-one-time noticed Freshie will be heard but not heeded.—*Extracted from Queen's College Journal.*

A CORRESPONDENT of *The Schoolmaster* in London, England, writing against the Merit Grant, says that for the last two years he has earned the "Excellent," but the strain to do this was simply killing him. The natural reply to this, by say Mr. Sharpe, would be, Why strive after the "Excellent"

at such a cost? It is not expected we may say not desired by the Education Department that more than a small percentage of schools should obtain the highest Merit Grant. The more schools that do reach the "Excellent" the higher the standard will be, and consequently the greater strain on all teachers, those who earn the "Excellent" and those who do not. Teachers almost without exception are convinced that the effort to earn the highest Merit Grant proves injurious to both teachers and scholars. Why, then, is the effort so general? The answer to this gives the cause from which spring many of the evils from which teachers suffer. If every teacher were content to do in the day a honest day's work and refused to trouble himself about Merit Grants, reports, and the like, they would at once be relieved from much, if not from all, the worry which now, in sober truth, is almost killing many of them. But what hope is there that such a state of things will ever exist? If all teachers were combined together, united action on their part would render the adoption of such a course perfectly easy. But teachers are divided; and it is the interest of some parties to keep them divided. So long as eachers cannot depend on each other honestly to carry out what is for the good of all so long must they continue to suffer evils for the existence of some of which none but themselves are responsible.

SOME statistical particulars have lately been published concerning the Italian universities, which present some items of general interest. There are twenty one universities altogether in the kingdom of Italy, seventeen of which are "royal"—that is, maintained out of the funds of the State—and four "free" universities (Camerino, Macerata, Ferrara, and Perugia) are maintained out of local funds. There is only one university for Piedmont, at Turin; one for Liguria, at Genoa; one for Lombardy, at Pavia; one for the old Venetian territories, at Padua; two for the islands of Sardinia, at Cagliari and Sassari Bologna, Modena, and Ferrara lie near each other: Tuscany has Pisa and Siena; Rome is for Central Italy; Naples is the only university for Southern Italy; while Sicily has three—Palermo, Messina, Catania. Naples is attended by 3,900 students an attendance which in Central Europe is only surpassed at Berlin and Vienna. Turin has an attendance of 2,100; Rome, 1,200; Bologna, 1,160; Padua, 1,000; Pavia, 1,000; Palermo, 950; Genoa, about 800; Pisa, 600; Catania, 400. Of the others, Modena is at the head with 270, and Ferrara at the foot with 39. Surely nothing would be lost by the amalgamation of these miniature universities. Ferrara only professes to teach medicine, mathematics, and jurisprudence; Macerate, juris-

prudence only. *Et contra*, the great Milan Academy—where Ascoli teaches (one of the greatest philologists in Europe), and the Abate Ceriani is librarian of the Ambrosian—has not the rank of a university, although it does more genuine university work than a dozen of the nominal universities. The same is to be said of the Institute of Higher Studies, at Florence, where the teaching staff includes the historian Villari, the great Hellenist Comparetti, and De Gubernatis, Bartoli, and Rajna—names famous all over Europe.

MRS. E. LYNN LYNTON, in the October number of the *Fortnightly*, takes up the Higher Education of Women from the point of view of Dr. Withers Moore. "Of late years," says this clever writer, "this question of woman's work has passed into another phase; the crux now is, not so much how they can be provided with work adequately remunerated, but how they can fit themselves for doing it without damage to their health and those interests of the race and society which are bound up with their well-being." "Interests of race and society"! who can take thought for these until the claim of the individual is satisfied? And is it at all certain that the individual, in thinking mainly or solely of his or her particular interest, is not so far, possibly without knowing it, also advancing the interests of the race and society? It does seem hard that in the education of women such indefinite and remote interests as those of the race and society should be set up as a bar to individual progress, whilst on the education of men the interests of the race and society are left to take care of themselves, or, more correctly, are considered to be sufficiently safeguarded by each one cultivating his powers in the direction marked out for him by his special aptitude or the exigencies of his position. Mrs. Lynton, we think, holds herself equally aloof from the facts of life when she lays down, as one of the three important points which enter into the question of the Higher Education of Women. "The wisdom or unwisdom for a father of limited means and uncaptialized income to send to college at great expense, girls who may marry, and so render the whole outlay of no avail." No father who is worth his beard ever considers whether the money he spends on the education of his daughter is lost or otherwise by reason of that daughter getting married. He is abundantly rewarded by the contemplation of the unfolding of the powers of his child's mind, and is not at all careful to weigh on an accurate balance the interest on *£. s. d.*, which the employment of those powers will yield for his outlay. Is it not a begging of the whole question to say that, when a girl marries, the outlay on her education will be rendered of no avail?