

only a trifle soiled, as if they had been worn only once or twice. 'Where did you get these?' asked the pawnbroker. 'Got 'em at home,' replied the man, who had an intelligent face and the manner of a gentleman, despite his sad condition. 'My—my wife bought them for our baby. Give me ten cents for 'em—I want a drink.' 'You had better take the shoes back to your wife; the baby will need them,' said the pawnbroker. 'No a-she won't because—because she's dead. She's lying at home now—died last night.' As he said this the poor fellow broke down, bowed his head on the showcase and cried like a child. Boys " said the drummer, "you can laugh if you please, but I—I have a baby of my own at home, and I swear I'll never drink another drop." Then he got up and went into another car. His companions glanced at each other in silence; no one laughed; the bottle disappeared, and soon each was sitting in a seat by himself reading a newspaper.

Practical Department.

THE GLORY OF TEACHING A-B-C.

Possibly it may serve to encourage us who toil on *this* side of the Atlantic, to know that our co-workers on the *other* side experience rather more difficulties, and toil under less favorable circumstances, than do we. The following was clipped from a recent copy of an English paper. F.

We have received from an eminent member of a provincial school board the following notes of an "examination day":

Mixed girls' and infants' school. Time fixed for examination sharp 9 a.m. At 10.15 H.M.'s Inspector enters hastily; children stand. H.M.'s Inspector leisurely divests himself of coat, hat, etc., which he deposits on the girls' needlework, and throws his bag on the harmonium. Puts on coat again. "This school-room is much too cold; shut all the doors and windows." Proceeds to examine registers, summary, logbook, etc., with his back to the children, turning round occasionally with, "There's a child there not attending to me," or "If that girl with a squint looks about her any more I won't examine her." At eleven o'clock: "Oh? how many pupil-teachers have you? Four, eh? Well, let all give a collective lesson to the whole school; subject, a cocked hat, or a pair of garters; or if they don't know what *they* are, the great sea-serpent, or Barnum's white elephant. Whoever finishes first shall have extra marks." About 11.30 begins to examine the school; gives dictation to Standard II. in a low and rapid tone so that they do not catch half he says,—"*As a fierce lion was prowling about in search of prey.*" At the same time he reads from a card a sum for another class,—"*If 17 couple of fat ducks sell for 3s. 6d. each, and I lose 9s. 0½d., what shall I have left?*" The second standard got puzzled, and write down, "*As 17 fierce duck were prowling about, trying to sell a fat lion who had lost 9s. 0½d.?*" The sum was taken down something like this: "*If 17 couple of lions lose 3s. 6d. each, how much prowling would be left out of 9s. 0½d.?*" He "*fails*" them all, turns to mistress, "*Your children are perfect idiots.*" Mistress weeps copiously. H.M.I. goes on to next class. Takes reading: "*Now, boy! I'm not deaf.*" Children have been specially implored to "*speak up for the inspector.*" "*Now, that girl,—no, not you, the one next but five,—tell me the meaning of a concatenation of ovents? Now don't be a week over it.*" Girl doesn't know. "*Then you are a stupid dolt! Can't you tell me anything about it? Is it about a cat or a nation, or what?*" "*Please, sir: yes, sir.*" "*Now which do you mean?*" Girl: "*Please, sir: no, sir!*" "*Fails*" her. Takes a class in geography: "*Now, all stand,—oh! you were standing,—and look at me. That girl with red hair, tell me the exact distance in English miles from Dan to Beersheba.*" Girl: "*Please, sir, it the other class learns the colonies,—not us.*" Mistress mentally resolves to give her "*what for*" presently.

Twelve o'clock strikes. H.M.I., cheerfully: "*Now I'll examine the infants.*" (*sotto voce*: "*I almost think I shall catch that train.*") Mistress: "*Please, sir, they're all crying, sir, they're so tired of*

standing." H.M.I.: "*I can't help that; let them sing, 'Oh, how we love inspection day!' and meanwhile show me your 'appropriate and varied occupations.'*" How many girls have you among the elder infants who can turn topple-tail *accurately*? and how many boys who answer to the name Mary, and can knit comforters? What proportion of this class brings pocket-handkerchiefs, and how many, if any, use them, except to clean their slates? How many books have the three year-olds read through this week, and can the whole school do Swiss darning? Mistress: "*Please, sir*"—H.M.I.: "*Now, I don't want any opinion from you. I'm here to inspect this school, not to hear what you think about it.*" (Song ended.) "*Well, that's fairly good; only I can make out neither words nor tune. Can they all say, 'A little cock-robin sat on a tree,' and 'A storm in a teapot,' and all 'Thompson's Seasons,' and 'Meddlesome Mattie' from beginning to end without a mistake? Oh! if they can't do that I shall recommend the withdrawal of one-half of the grant; (*sotto voce*): 'I shall catch the 12.35 train, I do believe.'*" Exit, forgetting to take away any of the papers, and to examine the needlework, writing, and singing.

THE TEACHING OF HISTORY.—If history must be taught to children, it would be more practical, if not more sensible, to begin with the reign of Queen Victoria and go backward according to periods. About three-fourths of our children leave school under the impression that English history ceased either at the date of the battle of Hastings, or at the end of the Wars of the Roses. The effort (to teach history on this plan) amounts to a *reductio ad absurdum*.

For all the higher purposes contemplated in the study, a thorough acquaintance with the state of England in one or two of the most eventful periods is of far more value than a superficial knowledge of the entire history. The latter may be forgotten. There is no germinating power in it; it will neither grow when the pupil carries it with him into the world of books and of news and of conversation, nor furnish material for reflection in solitary hours; but the former serves as a nucleus for future acquirement.—*Extracts from Reports of English Inspectors.*

A writer in the *English Journal of Education*, alluding to Mr. Freeman's *Historical Course for Schools*, says: "If Mr. Freeman, with his very great power, when he has space enough, of presenting forcibly and bringing past and present into mutually explanatory relations, could only have had a short year's experience as teacher of an average large form, how different a book would he have written! He would have learned at once, when he was sailing hopelessly overhead, when he was bewildering by hosts of unknown names, how necessary it is that there should be some heart, some human touch, in all teaching for the young. We must not, as we value our subject, blink the fact that we cannot go fast and give details. We must always be drawing an artistic picture." Boston has had some experience with one of Mr. Freeman's historical works for schools, and the result was an almost unanimous contempt for the work as a text-book. But when the masters of the schools, with almost the same unanimity, asked for a text-book treating the same subject, edited by one of its successful teachers, the school board replied by a deliberate refusal. It is probably the same in England as here,—school boards seem to think a teacher with his harness on has not inventive genius enough to manufacture, or even improve, the machinery which aids him in his work. Let him but throw that off, however, become a projector of conventions, or a Bohemian, and he at once becomes a successful author.

Superintendent Harrington, of New Bedford, speaking of the teaching of history, says, "I would throw away the text-books altogether, as such, and take the subject wholly out of the list of text-book studies. I would let no stated formal examinations lie in wait for it,—those premiums on narrow, technical teaching. The teachers should be free from every trammel,—free to make the instruction so delightful and winning as it may lie within their ability to accomplish. There should be no tasking study connected with it,—none whatever. It should be imparted by means of a carefully-selected course of reading, by visible illustrations, and by quickening oral information out of the stores of the teacher's personal intelligence. Biography, which has well been termed the soul of history, should play a prominent part. Youth turns to it by an instinctive proclivity, preferring it to other channels of literature, and by a fortunate coincidence it is the one effective medium through which the ethics of history, which gives it its chief value, can be placed in bold relief." It "*illustrates as nothing else can do the triumphs of virtue and the humiliations of vice.*"