

Literary.

SUPREMACY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Few doubt the supremacy of the English language. We have long believed and urged that this language should hold the foremost place in the curriculum of schools and colleges, and we are pleased to observe that this view is taken by President Eliot, of Harvard. He discusses the question "What is a Liberal Education?" in a paper in the *JUNE CENTURY*, advance sheets of which we have received. The importance of the paper lies in the fact that so prominent a scholar and educator should take such strong ground in favor of making the sciences and the English language leading branches in the college course. While admitting that Latin and Greek are valuable studies, he says of English: The first subject which, as I conceive, is entitled to recognition as of equal academic value or rank with any subject now most honored is the English language and literature. When Greek began to revive in Europe, English was just acquiring a literary form; but when Greek had won its present rank among the liberal arts, Shakspeare had risen, the English language was formed, and English literature was soon to become the greatest of modern literatures. How does it stand now, with its immense array of poets, philosophers, historians, commentators, critics, satirists, dramatists, novelists, and orators? It cannot be doubted that English literature is beyond all comparison the amplest, most various, and most splendid literature which the world has seen; and it is enough to say of the English language that it is the language of that literature. Greek literature compares with English as Homer compares with Shakspeare, that is, as infantile with adult civilization. It may further be said of the English language that it is the native tongue of nations which are preeminent in the world by force of character, enterprise, and wealth, and whose political and social institutions have a higher moral interest and greater promise than any which mankind has hitherto invented. To the original creations of English genius are to be added translations into English of all the masterpieces of other literatures, sacred and profane. It is a very rare scholar who has not learned much more about the Jews, the Greeks, or the Romans through English than through Hebrew, Greek or Latin.

And now, with all this wonderful treasure within reach of our youth, what is the position of American schools and colleges in regard to teaching English? Has English literature the foremost place in the programmes of schools? By no means; at best only a subordinate place, and in many schools no place at all. Does English take equal rank with Greek or Latin in our colleges? By no

means. . . Shall we be told, as usual, that the best way to learn English is to study Latin and Greek? The answer is, that the facts do not corroborate this improbable hypothesis. American youth in large numbers study Latin and Greek, but do not thereby learn English. Moreover, this hypothesis is obviously inapplicable to the literatures. Shall we also be told, as usual, that no Hinguistic discipline can be got out of the study of the native language? How, then, was the Greek mind trained in language? Shall we be told that knowledge of English literature should be picked up without systematic effort? The answer is, first, that as a matter of fact this knowledge is not picked up by American youth, and, secondly, that there never was any good reason to suppose that it would be. The acquisition of a competent knowledge of English literature being not an easy but a laborious undertaking for an average youth—not a matter of entertaining reading, but of serious study. Indeed, there is no subject in which competent guidance and systematic instruction are of greater value." We regret we have not space for more of this valuable paper.

"THE SUN" has risen in Ottawa, since our last issue, in the form of a sprightly, independent, evening paper. There is a "ring" about the articles in the Sun, for the most part, which is generally admired. On city matters and on the temperance question it speaks out admirably. Thinks if "Mayor Bate" were "worth his salt" he would have resisted the appointment of a police inspector, and that Ottawa "might as well have a stouff-ton bottle for Mayor." The Sun will not support prohibition but will help in "educating the people" to abandon intemperate habits. Long may "The Sun" shine in Ottawa.

Books and Pamphlets Received.

JOURNAL D'HYGIÈNE POPULAIRE, the official organ of the "Société d'Hygiène" of the Province of Quebec, Dr. Severin Lachapelle, editor, Montreal. We have received the first number of this new journal. It has a neat appearance and contains much useful, practical information. Besides the chief editor and the manager there is a long list of able collaborateurs. We have no doubt this society and its journal will prove very valuable educators of the people of Quebec in matters relating health.

MEDICAL EDUCATION and the regulation of the practice of medicine in the United States and Canada; a volume of nearly 200 pages issued by the Illinois state board of health.

PUBLIC HEALTH a working man's question, an address to the working classes by Alfred Carpenter, M. D. Lond., C. S. S. Camb., issued by the Sanitary Institute of Great Britain, E. Wallis, F. S. S., F. M. S., Secretary.