

but his letters alone are now read: like the letters of John of Salisbury, they abound in quotations from Scripture, and from ecclesiastical and profane writers, but Peter's own writing is unencumbered by forced antitheses and a constant play upon words. Thomas à Becket was born in London, and educated at Oxford, but was sent to France, while young, to lose the English accent, the hateful vulgarity of which would have rendered his association with respectable people impossible. He returned from his travels fully accomplished. Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, made him his deacon, and the King made him his chancellor; he was also entrusted with the education of the King's eldest son, and he subsequently became archbishop of Canterbury.

From Fitzstephen's life-like description of London in this reign we obtain a picture of the hardy sports which then formed an important portion of the education of the people, as it did of the early Britons. To the north of the City were pasture-lands, with mill-streams; and beyond was an immense forest, with dense thickets, where stags, fallow-deer, and wild bulis had their coverts; and through this, citizens, by the Charter of Henri I., had liberty to hunt. This great hunting-ground is now a suburb of the metropolis; and as the Londoner strolls over the picturesque locality of "Hampstead Heath," he may encounter many an aged thorn—the lingering indications of a forest—and in the beautiful domain of Caen Wood, he may carry his mind's-eye back to those Anglo-Norman sports of seven centuries since. Hawking was also among their free recreations. Football was their favourite game; the boys of the schools, and the various guilds of craftsmen, having each their ball. In summer, the youths exercised themselves in leaping, archery, wrestling, stonethrowing, slinging javelins, and fighting with bucklers. In winter, when "the great fen or moor" which washed the city walls on the north was frozen over, sliding, sledging, and skating were the sports of crowds, who had also their sham fights on the ice, which latter had their advantages; for as Fitzstephen says, "Youth is an age eager for glory and desirous of victory, and so young men engage in counterfeit battles, that they may conduct themselves more valiantly in real ones." We are even told how the young Londoners, by placing the leg-bones of animals under their feet, and tying them round their ankles, by aid of an iron-shod pole, pushed themselves forward with great velocity along the ice of the frozen moor; and one of these *bone-skates*, found in digging Moor-fields, may now be seen in the British Museum.

The Latinity of the writers during this reign was more pure than in many of the following ones. It has been presumed that the monks of these times were ignorant of classical learning, from Caxton speaking in one of his prefaces of Virgil's *Æneid* as a story then hardly known, and without any commendation of the poetry; but it appears by Fitzstephen that in the schools of his time, the scholars daily *torquent enthymemata*, an expression which shows that he was well versed in Juvenal. John of Salisbury was as well versed and as ready in citing the Latin classics as the men who have been most eminent for this knowledge in modern times. The Saxons also seem to have made a distinction between the Latin which was spoken by some of the clergy, and what was to be found in classical books.

(To be continued.)

Taking a Thing for Granted.

One of Her Majesty's School Inspectors gives the following account of a school examination:—

"I was once inspecting a school, to speak in slighting terms of which would convey an utterly incorrect impression of its relative quality. As compared with other schools it was a very respectable and thriving institution. The clergyman learned, assiduous, pious, and most deservedly of high position and repute; beloved in his parish, and esteemed beyond it. The teacher was accomplished, industrious, humble minded, and zealous in his work. The first class had read a portion of the Sermon on the Mount. I asked them whose were the words they had been reading. No answer. I repeated the question in many varied forms; but still no answer. The clergyman said they could not understand my way of putting the question. I therefore showed them some very bad penmanship of my own, which lay upon the table, addressed to the correspondent of the school, and asked whose words those were; and they gave the answer with terrible precision. I asked whose were the words of the sermon they had heard last Sunday; they reply (I have no doubt with equal accuracy), 'the clergyman's.' I asked whose were the words of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans; and they said, 'St.

Paul's.' I now repeated my first question, 'Who spoke the words of the Sermon on the Mount?' No answer still. The visitors grew uncomfortable; the teacher distressed; and the clergyman, assuring me that the children could answer the question if intelligibly proposed to them, accepted, at my request, the responsibility of putting it. 'Now, my dear children,' he proceeded, 'I am going to ask you precisely the same question as the Inspector, which I am sure you can answer.' 'Who spoke the words of the Sermon on the Mount?' But before answering it, think for a moment who it was; and as you pronounce his name, make a bow or courtesy of obeisance, for it is written, 'at his name every knee shall bow.' So, now; whose words were they?"

"I need not add that the question was answered by a shout more accurate, triumphant, and unanimous, than reverential; that comfort and good humor were restored, and that I was looked upon as an incompetent and discomfited examiner. But when afterwards alone with the teacher, a frank and candid person, I thought it well to inquire whether it was supposed that the children had been really able to answer the question which I in vain put to them. No, it was readily acknowledged they had not. Had they ever been told whose words those were? No, most likely not; it had been taken for granted that they knew so simple a thing as that. Would the children ever, of their own accord, have inquired whose they were? No, it was not in their way to do so.

"And yet several of these children would have answered questions far more difficult than any that I should have dreamed of putting to them; questions in the books of Deuteronomy, or Daniel, or the Epistle to the Hebrews."—*English S. S. Teachers' Magazine*.

Corrupt English.

"I should like to see a tribunal established at Westminster," says a correspondent of a literary journal, "for the trial of those who assail and batter the Queen's good English. With such a man as the late Sir Philip Francis on the judgment seat, we should fill all the state prisons during Hilary term. I mention two more of the most recent improvements in the language of Old England, for the making of which platform orators and the daily newspaper press cannot be too much complimented. *Patent*—A word, in the dark age of William Shakspeare, that was wont to be used only as a substantive, and always meant something appropriated by letters patent; but in the Augustan age of Gifford and Tupper, it seems bad breeding to use the words clear, plain, evident, intelligible, open—we must say patent, if you please, instead. 'I feel confident,' thunders one gentleman, who is denouncing the Pope in Exeter Hall, 'that this utterly abominable priestcraft must be patent to you all.' 'My Luds,' says another (Mr. Slipslop, Q. C.), 'that the last witness called has disgracefully perjured himself must be patent to everybody present in this court.' 'Have faith in this sublime truth, my beloved brethren,' snuffles the Honorable and Very Reverend Somebody, in his most sonorous cadence, 'the road to eternal life is patent to you all.' Some—'The jury retired for some half hour or so, to deliberate upon their verdict.' Here is a vicious sense in which to use the word 'some'—it makes flat nonsense of it. Why not say, 'The jury retired for half an hour or thereabouts; or, 'For about an hour?' Yet these learned rindits, these ripe scholars, would laugh consumedly if they heard any man say that 'The judge retired to drink some sherry or so,' or that 'The foreman of the jury came into court and delivered some verdict or so.' Our own correspondents' in the daily public prints have been at a great feast of languages and stolen the scraps. Critical severity, therefore, on these points, cannot be pushed to an excess."—*Rhode Island Schoolmaster*.

LITERATURE.

POETRY.

SCORN NOT THE LEAST.

Where words are weak, and foes encountering strong,
Where mightier do assault than do defend,
The feeble part puts up enforced wrong,
And silent sees that speech could not amend.
Yet, higher powers must think, though they reprove,
When sun is set the little stars will shine.