

hampered for lack of mathematical knowledge. But this experience will serve as a stimulus to them in their mathematical studies, giving the interest of practical value to what might otherwise appear to be a mere species of mental gymnastic.

I have now shewn you, at somewhat wearisome length, why it is that Prof. Minchin's criticisms on the kind of work which we propose to do in our more elementary classes, seem to me to be without foundation, and why, therefore, notwithstanding his criticisms, I intend to maintain the present organisation of classes in our Physical Department. To you I must trust to give the system a thorough trial. And I think I can promise you, that if you devote to the subject a fair share of your time and energy, you will not find yourselves at the end of your course, so lacking either in spontaneity or in power as Prof. Minchin would have us believe, although you may have indulged somewhat freely in Calculus dodging and other educational sins.

IN its issue for December 28th, the *Scientific American* says of the influenza now epidemic in Europe: The disease is not dangerous, except sometimes to children or the aged, while the former often show a decided exemption. * * The disease is undoubtedly due to some micro-organism which floats in the air, and which infects the human system, but is generally killed in so doing. For influenza is but slightly if at all contagious."

DIE STEEL should contain from eight to one per cent of carbon and no manganese, water tempered to a straw color. Professor Robertson-Austen says such a die will strike 40,000 coins without fracture or deformation. If it contained one per cent more it would not strike 100 without cracking. If it contained two per cent less it would be hopelessly distorted and its engraved surface destroyed.

AN ARAB SAYING

Remember, three things come not back:
The arrow sent upon its track—
It will not swerve, it will not stay
Its speed; it flies to wound or slay.

The spoken word, so soon forgot
By thee; but it has perished not:
In other hearts 'tis living still,
And doing work for good or ill.

And the lost opportunity,
That cometh back no more to thee,
In vain thou weepest, in vain dost yearn,
Those three will nevermore return.

Constantine E. Brooks, in the Century.

Literature, the Sunshine of a Busy Life.

(Concluded.)

But, as you know, when a nation comes to reckon up the great names in its literature, it is not the historian or the philosopher who is put in the foremost place, but the poet. And the reason of this is plain. You want higher and rarer gifts to make a poet than to make a respectable writer in any other department of literature. Poetry has been defined as the breath and finer essence of all knowledge, and George Eliot, I think it is in *Middlemarch*, speaks of the poetic gift as showing itself "when knowledge passes into feeling, and feeling again is given back as a new instrument of knowledge. A man may train himself by diligent cultivation of very ordinary qualities to be a meritorious novelist, or historian, or write a grammar or a physics; but he cannot train himself to be a poet. That name is reserved by universal consent for the man who, in addition to whatever acquired knowledge he has, possesses also "The vision and the faculty divine;" that gift of imagination, that innate perception of the reality which lies beneath the surface of things, which we call genius. The very word "poet" implies creative power, and this is far beyond the power to remember, to reflect, and to know, for all these are powers which might be communicated by education or acquired by continuous effort. And hence in all ages the greatest and most original minds have expressed themselves in poetry, and the men of whom their countrymen have been proudest have been the poets.

Consider for a moment how many and varied have been the forms in which the poetic instinct has at times manifested itself. You could not say beforehand what subjects were or were not susceptible of poetic treatment; because all subjects—even those which at first sight appear to us most prosaic, admit of being touched with emotion and illuminated with the hues which a glowing imagination and a deep spiritual insight and sympathy can cast upon them. And when this finer touch and sympathy and insight are present, you have poetry. When they are absent you may have plenty of excellent verse and faultless rhyme; but you have no poetry. The subject matters little. The treatment of it matters much. For example, if we are to define lyric poetry, we should say that its fitting topics were love, war, the beauty and the glory of the visible world, or any subject which arouses strong emotion. And we might illustrate this by the rolling verse of Milton, as he exults in the thought of approaching Christmas:

Ring out, ye crystal spheres,
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so.
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time,
And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow.
And with your nine fold harmony
Make up full concert to the angelic symphony.

Or take the expression of rapt enthusiasm and delight with which Shelley watched the sky-lark, as he sang:

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine
I have never heard.
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine,
Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found.
Thy skill to poet were thou scorner of the ground,
Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know
Such harmonious madness,
From thy lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.