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Editorial Notes.

THE bitter cry of suffering Armenia reaches, we cannot doubt, the very heavens. It should reach the heart of every man and woman in every Christian land, and meet with such response that the fear of starvation should no longer be added to all the other unspeakable woes which Turkish misrule and Moslem fanaticism and savagery have brought upon this most unhappy people.

THE crisis of the Manitoba school difficulty is apparently near. After having been, doubtless, the chief cause of a temporary upheaval in the Dominion Cabinet, and of a thousand discussions, *pro* and *con*, in the press and from platforms and pulpits, all over Canada, the Government Remedial Bill is now before Parliament. No doubt the discussion there will be long and warm. The issue it seems impossible to predict with any degree of confidence.

THROUGH some delay the "copy" for the Mathematical Department did not reach us in time for this number. Look for this department in next issue. Meanwhile its place will, to some extent, be well supplied by the useful and instructive article which has been very kindly given us by Mr. Douglass on "Actuary Calculations." By it the leading principles underlying calculations which, though of the utmost practical moment, are gener-

ally considered too abstruse for ordinary pupils, are made clear to the comprehension of school boys in their teens. Mr. Douglass' article will, we are sure, be read with much interest. Why should not this subject have a place in our school text-books in arithmetic?

IN our Entrance Department we have placed an interesting sample of an observation lesson kindly sent us by Mr. Fred. A. Clarkson. The method set forth is well worth attention. Surely no teacher who uses such methods, as we hope very many do, will fail to use the excellent opportunity offered to combine with the training of the observing faculties the culture of the moral sentiments, especially the love of mercy. For instance, each member of the class was requested, in this case, to bring a fly. How many of these were careful to handle the tender creature with gentleness, and avoid causing it to suffer pain? It is obvious that experimental lessons of this kind may have either of the two opposite effects of developing tenderness, or indifference, to the sufferings of the weak things handled. We have no space to enlarge. But better a thousand times that the child should grow up with such study of the animal world as can be made without contact with the creatures observed than that closer observation should be taught at the expense of the finer and nobler sentiments of humanity. The object lesson may have either effect, as we have said. Which is the more common one?

A WRITER in the *Journal of Education* makes an earnest argument and appeal against the use of the hyphen in compounding words. He pathetically beseeches editors to "stand by the anti-hyphen (why not antihyphen?) party, and lend a hand." We strive, we trust, to preserve the attitude which makes us "easy to be entreated"; but we cannot as yet see our way clear to respond, in our own little sphere, to the appeal. To us the hyphen appears to serve a most valuable and necessary purpose in our language. In fact, we have long been of

opinion that it is sadly neglected in much of our literature, especially in our periodical literature, with the result of a distinct loss in precision of speech, and in the capacity of the language for making nice distinctions. We are, however, "open to conviction," and do not utterly despair of seeing the man who may be able to convince us, for hyphens are troublesome things, and are not, we frankly admit, pretty to look at when they appear in force on the printed page. But we cannot see, as yet, how one could express thoughts with any degree of precision without them.

VICTOR HUGO has said that the man who opens a school door closes a jail door. Some facts and figures given by Mr. Thomas Greenwood, in a book he has recently published on "Public Libraries," are quoted by an English contemporary as confirmatory of the dictum. "In 1856," he reminds us, "the number of young persons committed for what are called indictable offences was 14,000; in 1856 it had fallen to 10,000; in 1876, to 7,000; in 1881, to 6,000; and in 1886, to 5,100. And this though the population had risen from 19,000,000 to 27,000,000, so that juvenile crime was less than half what it was, though the number of children was one-third larger. The prison statistics are scarcely less satisfactory. The average number of persons in prison was, in 1878, 21,000; in 1880, 19,000; in 1882, 18,000; in 1884, 17,000; in 1886, 15,800; and, in 1885, 14,500. Indeed, our prison population is mainly recruited from those who cannot read. Out of 164,000 persons committed to prison, no less than 160,000 were uneducated, and only 4,000 were able to read and write well." This is in the United Kingdom, of course. Unhappily, there is another side to the shield, in the great increase in crime in the United States and Canada, as shown by recent statistics. This proves, not that the inference from the above facts and figures is wrong, but that powerful counteracting agencies are at work on this continent. What are they? We may return to this hard, practical question.