

manufacturers of Pear's Soap, paint-tees—but their farm duties do not keep them in touch with school improvement.

You have doubtless noticed the English Home children who have been taken care of by the State. Did you ever compare their writing with the illy-formed, haphazard writing of so many of our pupils?

What, dear editor, is your opinion of Grammar, as it is taught, according to our advanced (?) Grammars, to the child of eight or nine years who is in the Second Book? Also, what think you of Geography for the same class? I have looked through both Grammar and Geography, and if I were a school boy or girl in the aforesaid Second Book, or even Third, I would rebel—yes, I would. Not a decent map for drawing in the whole book. Maps of countries, all right, but such a confused mass of color, rivers, lakes, counties, and such, that the child gets hopelessly bewildered. Then they are told to

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if it would remember that we furnish it children for five days out of the week, for forty weeks in the year, and we have a right to expect the best from it.

Kent Co., Ont.

The Windrow.

Leonarda da Vinci was the first to employ the signs of plus and minus. His stone-saw is still employed in the marble quarries of Carrara.

Benjamin Franklin invented the first American rocking-chair. It was made with curved slats at the back, and the rockers projected as far in front as behind.

THE ETERNAL MYSTERY.

The recent disappearance from the Louvre of Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting, "Mona Lisa," has

"Isn't it a wise, tender smile?" asked the first.

"Why, I don't think she's smiling at all," said the man, "that's a sad expression."

The women turned away in despair, and the man was left to ponder the features of the mysterious Lady of Florence.—[Courier.

Ruskin as an Art Critic.

It is probably by this time pretty generally recognized that the debt that we owe to Ruskin is not primarily for what he did and said about art. It was as a moralist and a philosopher that he was really great. Of course, when a man of high intellectual powers devotes a large portion of his life to the study of a subject, it is inevitable that his labors must possess a certain value. We may even go further than that and say that when a man of high intellectual powers chooses to write upon a subject, what he writes must possess a certain value. But it is quite possible that the kernel of the nut may be found in his digressions or in light incidentally thrown upon other matters. Ruskin's writings upon art possess very great value, but their value is not for what they tell us about art, but for what they tell us about Ruskin. Every page of "Modern Painters" is worth reading, not because its author was a great art critic, but because he was a great philosopher and moralist. No time is wasted which is spent in the company of the wise and good.—[L. W. Clarke, in Macmillan's Magazine.

The Politician.

Carven in leathern mask or brazen face,

Were I time's sculptor, I would set this man.

Retreating from truth, his hawk eyes scan

The platforms of all public thought for place.

There wriggling with insinuating grace,

He takes poor hope and effort by the hand,

And flatters with half-truths and accents bland,

Till even zeal and earnest love grow base.

Knowing no right save power's grim right of way,

No nobleness save life's ignoble praise,

No future save this sordid day to day,

He is the curse of these material days,

Juggling with mighty wrongs and mightier lies,

This worshiper of Dagon and his flies.

The Statesman.

Born with a love of truth and liberty,

And earnest for the public right he stands

Like solitary pine in wasted lands.

Or some paladin of old legends, he Would live that other souls like his be free;

Not caring for self nor pelf nor pandering power,

He thunders incessant, earnest hour by hour,

Till some old despot shackles cease to be.

Not his the gaudy title nor the place Where hungry fingers clutch his country's gold;

But where the trodden crouch in evil case,

His cause is theirs to lighten or to hold.

His monument the people's true acclaim,

And title high, a love more great than fame.

—[W. Wilfred Campbell, in The Outlook.

A Rural School Question.

"Aydeare," Kent Co., Ont., raises a question, or, rather, a number of questions, in regard to our rural-school system. We should be glad to hear opinions on this subject, pro or con, from anyone interested. "Aydeare" writes as follows:

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate": Once upon a time you were a boy, so I venture to write you upon a subject which often occurs to me, more especially since I have seen that the Education Department intended raising the standard of the public school. This would sound encouraging if they really meant it; it would be more encouraging if, instead of "raising" it, they would "broaden" it.

If the Department of Education had ever been a boy, or a number of boys, I believe the curriculum of studies would be modified and made more practicable, as well as practical.

My grouch is the improvement and modernizing of the studies of the country scholar. This last two or three years the country scholars have been badly plucked, and we are told that they cannot hope to compete with the city and town schools. Why should there be such a difference? Why should the country schools be deficient in their knowledge of the two R's, "Ritin'" and "Rithmetic," as well as other subjects, notably, Grammar? Why should the poorest city child have a better chance of getting a practical education in the city school than the rich man's son gets in the country? Why should not the senior boys in the country be able to enjoy manual training, and learn the proper way to make boxes, drive nails, use a saw, etc.?

Why should not the senior girls be taught the same, likewise sewing and cooking? These things are taught by correspondence; why can not the Department issue text-books, fully illustrated?

Why should the motto of the country trustees be "Deficiency," while that of the city ones is generally "Efficiency"?

Our school has an average of 40, with a winter attendance of more than 50, some days. There are sometimes three first classes: Senior and Junior High First, Senior and Junior Second, Senior and Junior Third, Senior and Junior Fourth, and then, some "Leaving." These four teachers has to instruct in nine or ten different subjects. She is a good teacher—none better—but the system is wrong that allows so much over-work on her part. Divide this school into two rooms, and have two teachers, and the results would be more satisfactory. But there would not be a few more scholars before the law would allow this.

Our trustees are good, and meet possibly four times a year, but about three times more than the average aggregation of country



Princes in the Tower.

(From a painting by Millais.)

"draw a map of North America, putting in the countries and capitals, marking the principal rivers and the lakes." Now, why could not the "geographers" have put in outline maps like that in the text-books, leaving out so much of the irregular outline of the coast, and putting the map in shape so that the child can see at once what is wanted?

I would just say, in closing, that it would be a good thing if every parent had a copy of the school law, and knew what they could demand for their children.

If the section were obliged to furnish books and pencils and scribbles for the boys, then there would be no more work all around. If the section would come down off the pedestal, and get in touch with the needs of the children for

led to much discussion of the fascinating and baffling lady who was so vividly depicted by the great genius.

"I wonder what her smile means?" said a woman who was looking at a copy in a Canadian shop. "She looks as if she had discovered just how little worth while everything is."

"I don't think so," promptly remarked another. "She is scheming or planning some mischief. I shouldn't be surprised if she were going to poison one of her enemies. That is the smile of an evil nature."

"It isn't at all," said the first. "She is just the wisest woman who ever lived."

A man friend approached at this moment, and the two fair disputants appealed to him.

"Hasn't she a wicked smile?" asked the second.