

(For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.)

TEACHING.

"Teaching in the abstract," like anything else in the abstract, is "vera praiseworthy but unco-dool." We will dismiss it in a few words.

The best way of teaching in the abstract seems that in vogue in the excellent Protestant Commissioners' Schools at Montreal. The theory acted on is that children are naturally "inquisitive," (or "fond of knowledge") and will enjoy their lessons under proper conditions. Some of these are as follows:

1. They must be taught what they can be made to want to know.
2. They must be taught ideas and not mere words.
3. They must be taught no one subject and in no one room for too long together.

One result of this, which we may mention, is that children are there seen more excited over their object lessons than they are over their games.

SPELLING

is best taught where the classes write picked words from each lesson, instead of saying all of it. Few of us are asked to spell a dozen words in a year, and many are spelling words, while writing, several hours a day. If the scholars correct one another's slates, a large class may be ranked in a short time, and the mind doubly trained with great pleasure to itself. Distinct advantage has been found to result, in Montreal, from marking an uncrossed "t," or an undotted "i," or a half formed letter, as a distinct mistake.

IN WRITING,

Legibility, or rather the "impossibility of being misread" should be the first aim. To ensure this (until our present barbarous cursive alphabet be re-modelled for the Universal International Alphabet of the Future,) the regular hand, Lord Palmerston's bug-bear, which sometimes succeeds in making no less than ten letters out of the twenty-six, all exactly alike and

UTTERLY INDISTINGUISHABLE,

must be sedulously eschewed. The 'm's and 'n's must join at the top and the 'u's at the bottom, and the 'r's be very carefully formed.

Legibility must come first; the possibility of future rapidity, next; and elegance will come of itself. To have a plain alphabet free from flourishes, painted on a board and put up in the schoolroom, and to make the boys copy the shape of their individual letters from this, as at St. Roch's, Quebec, might obviate the difficulty of getting good copy books. Flourishes might be practised as a separate exercise to give a bold free hand, but a child should surely be taught, from the first, to make his letters after one pattern, plain and simple. The advantage of the constant practise of round text copies to give a bold free hand, does not seem as well recognised here as it is in England.

ARITHMETIC.

Here again, strangely enough, legibility seems a first and foremost necessity. One tithe of the mistakes in arithmetic, which bar progress and make that vexing which would otherwise be pleasant, are found to come from mistaking the 1, 4, 7, and 9 from each other in working sums on a slate. To prevent this, the '1' should be a single line, the '4' have a short down-stroke, and the '9' should have a rounded tail.

The tables of multiplication and of the weights and measures can be taught to infants in amusing sing-song, accompanied in part with chest-expanding movements of the arms, as at the Infant School, Quebec. It is hard to learn them in after life, while to have learnt them ineradicably is invaluable. In manipulating a large class the Mao-Vic apparatus is most useful. By it a class of mere children, at the St. Ann Street School, Montreal, did eighteen sums in addition of fractions in six minutes!

BOOK-KEEPING

is thus widely taught, at the Missisquoi High School, to a room full at once.

Assume the School to be a trading firm; imagine, daily, certain personages of comic or historic importance, to buy, to pay, or be paid. Put these transactions into book-keeping language, and give it as an exercise in dictation for slate and copy-book successively. "Post" once a week.

CLASSICS.

The importance of the study of classics can hardly be overrated. It puts the finest edge on the cultured mind. This study alone gives real insight into our mother-tongue. It multiplies the powers of memory. It fosters intense concentration of mind. It enforces attention to the exact meaning of expressions, without which many read through whole books without thoroughly grasping a single sentence. But attention might be called to the advantage of not beginning the study of classics before the age of thirteen or fourteen. If the pupil be called from school at that age, he is then the better up in the other indispensable subjects. If not, he overtakes, in one or two months, the results of years of drudgery, and too often continued punishment. At Sherbrooke, a lad, who had only begun Greek a few months, passed a satisfactory examination in the Accidence and translation of several chapters in Xenophon.

FRENCH,

on the contrary, seems learnt with little effort, and is immediately useful. It might be arithmetic that school directions be given and arithmetic (and perhaps to the higher classes, the History of Canada), be taught in French.

SINGING AND DRAWING

refresh and recreate for other studies, besides developing the higher part of our minds. No programme of studies is complete without them. Some claim that the Tonic Sol-Fa system of singing is vastly superior to that in vogue in Montreal. By it a class of 50 boys and girls, near Richmond, was able after only 12 lessons to sing twenty difficult pieces of music at sight in one evening, and a dozen lessons is all its professors claim to teach an average class to sing at sight. Ontario is dissatisfied with the Hullah system and has sent a commission to enquire into the modification of it, in use at Boston.

LITERARY NOTICES.

A short paper in the October number of the SOUTHERN MAGAZINE deals with the Negro in his Religious Aspect. The writer states that the negro is generally an Athenian in his creed, and sacrifices on every altar to Gods known and unknown. According to him, there is no doubt that a vast number believe in the plurality of Gods. An article on Sir Philip Sidney brings prominently forward the figure of that wonderful man, so un-English in many aspects, so thoroughly a Briton in others, and attention is properly drawn to the remarkable fact that, in reading the story of Sidney, we are brought into contact with almost every celebrity of his day—Henry of Navarre, Margaret of Valois, Mornay du Plessis, Sarpi, Tasso, Veronese, Titian, Herbert Languet, William of Orange, Lepsius, Ursinus, Essex, Raleigh and Spenser. The stories in this number of the *Southern* are all excellent, especially Her Book, a serial of considerable power. This magazine is second to no other American periodical and is a credit to the South.

The Amoretti or Love-Sonnets of Spenser are cleverly analyzed in the October number of the PENN MONTHLY. These are eighty eight in number and addressed to the Elizabeth who was afterwards his wife. Spenser's Sonnets are almost as great an enigma as Shakespeare's.

There is also a slight but pleasant paper on the Early Literature of Tobacco, in which we are informed that the name of the weed, which the Indians called Picielt, is derived from an island named Tabaco. It appears likewise that the plant was first introduced into England, not by Sir Walter Raleigh, as is generally imagined, but by Sir John Hawkins, about the year 1565. Nicot, French Ambassador to Portugal, brought it to France from Lisbon about 1560. Tobacco is said not to be alluded to in the Arabian Nights or by Shakespeare, but it is often noticed by other English Dramatists. "Musk Millions" was the old pronunciation of melons, introduced into England simultaneously with tobacco. Among the solid papers for which this magazine is distinguished is one on the English Bible and its Revision, which is at present being diligently prosecuted in England, and to which the American churches are associated as a "mere advisory board." The writer is quite bold to declare that the revision will entail some decided alterations. He says that the periodical descent of the Angel to trouble the waters of the Bethesda pool will doubtless be excised, as also the text comparing Jonah's three days and three nights in the whale's belly to those of the Son of Man in the grave. The doubtful of the woman taken in adultery, with its doubtful moral that the magistrate must be sinless to be just, will disappear, "if the translators are faithful to their text;" and the much-discussed verse about the three that bear record in heaven will be "at last sent packing." The writer further advocates the adoption of the Jewish Canon in the old Testament—the Law, the Prophets and the Hagiographa or Deuterocanonical books; and the arrangement of the books of the New Testament according to the three Apostolic schools of teaching—the Petrine (Mark, Matthew, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude), the Pauline (Luke, Acts, Paul's Epistles, and that to the Hebrews which he holds is not Paul's), and the Johannine group of writings.

The principal feature of the CANADIAN MONTHLY for October is an exhaustive paper by General M. Butt Hewson, on the Grand Trunk Railway. The writer is thoroughly competent by professional experience to treat this subject intelligently, and, by social position, to treat it impartially. He begins by inquiring why the Grand Trunk does not pay. He shows from statistics that excessive railway construction in Ontario cannot be the reason, and, from the same authorities, that the severity of the Canadian climate cannot be assigned as a cause. He traces the trouble to a question of management which he treats in all its phases. As a remedy the article proposes that the Grand Trunk Company go, under a special Act protecting the stockholders, into insolvency; and that it cancel then its exhausting leases, and removing its business from the basis of an unhealthy inflation, place it on the basis of real values. Decentralising the management by placing the road under divisional directors subject to the review of a representative control composed of heads of divisions meeting once a month in Montreal, the article recommends further that the Company transact its business before the public. And here it calls on the Government as a duty not only to the shareholders, but the Canadian people, to establish a railway bureau with power to obtain searching annual statements of all the railroads of the country for Parliament, in order to place them beyond market riggings or capital inflations. The other contributions to the magazine are up to the usual standard of excellence.

"FAUST" AT THE GRAND OPERA.

Lucy Hooper writes from Paris to the Philadelphia Telegraph: "Faust" has at length been produced at the Grand Opera. It is, in point of scenery and costumes and ballet and *mise-en-scene* generally, the most superb of all the operas as yet brought out at this establishment. The first scene, which gives scope to but little display, was chiefly remarkable for the vivid effect of morning light that flashed through Faust's casement and the beautiful arrangement of the vision that presents *Marguerite* at her spinning-wheel. The second scene, that of the Kermesse, would have been very fine had there been anything of a Kermesse about it, but there were no booths and no shows, only a most exquisitely painted view of a German village street, with the houses decked with garlands and banners for a festival. The various divisions of the celebrated chorus in this act—the soldiers, the old men, &c.—numbered twenty performers each. In the earlier days of the opera at home I have heard it sung by four. The ballet in this act introduced to the waltz air was simply exquisite—a very kaleidoscope of changing, shifting hues and of graceful, fitting forms. The garden scene, with its shadowy trees, its beds of flowers, and its turfy walks, was very pretty, but the atmospheric effects were nothing remarkable. I have seen "Faust" played in Berlin when the various changes in this scene from golden and rosy sunset to cold twilight, and then to dark, starry, and moonlight-flooded night, were marvellously represented. The cathedral scene was grand and impressive. The side of the altar, a massive structure in dark, carved wood, towering high in the air and blazing with lights, was presented to the spectator, while the dim Gothic aisles of the cathedral stretched away on either side. A low railing of white marble on the right-hand side, with an open portal surmounted by statues, gave admission to poor remorseful *Marguerite*, who knelt there alone, while the other worshippers passed on into the body of the church. The street scene (where the soldiers' chorus is sung and *Valentine* slain by *Faust*) was perhaps the most successful of all. It represented the ramparts of an ancient German city, with a steep ascending road at one side, and at the other one of those antique gateways wrought with profuse imagery and surmounted with a clock, wherewith one becomes so familiar in such old German towns. Down the steep road poured the returning soldiers, battalion after battalion, while the crowd rushed to meet them. Women thronged around, little children followed the band; the scene was perfect in its illusion. So many persons were there on the stage at once, that vast as it is, it was crowded in every part. The "Walpurgis Night," which is never given in America, came next. It was conventional and unpoetical, and showed a thorough lack of appreciation of the weird *diablerie* of this part of Goethe's wondrous poem. The first scene, intended as a representation of the witches' kitchen, was very poor, and the enchanted palace of the next scene displayed to us merely an ordinary ballet, with the usual pirouettes and poses and nothing supernatural about it. The only novel feature was a ballet of Egyptian girls, who drain golden goblets and get very tipsy, some of them falling full length on the floor. Though novel, the effect was far from being agreeable. Here again Paris suffered by comparison with Berlin. The vision of *Marguerite* on the Brocken was very badly managed. The projecting point of rock on which she stood was pushed on at one side and then pulled off again in very unsupernatural fashion. The apotheosis of the finale, showing tier upon tier of white-robed, silver-winged angels surrounding the uprising form of *Marguerite*, was very beautiful, but it would have been more poetical had the central group been a copy of the lovely "St. Cecilia borne to Heaven" and not an actual cluster of veritable flesh and blood *figurantes*. The costumes were very gorgeous, everything being entirely new and of the richest quality. And now for the cast. Alas, I must confess to my having enjoyed the music of "Faust" far more when I have heard it among less brilliant surroundings. For the *Mephistopheles* of Gailhardt, the *Faust* of Verget, nay, even the *Marguerite* of Miolan-Carvalho, are far from being wholly satisfactory. And I, who have heard Nilsson and Capoul at home, and Wachtel and Luca in Berlin, and the *Mephistopheles* of Faure, to say nothing of that of Hermanns, found but little satisfaction in listening to the troupe at the Grand Opera.

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED YEARS AFTER DEATH.

A correspondent of *Appletons' Journal* writing of excavations at Pompeii says: Among the most interesting of the subjects found recently are two skeletons, one of a somewhat elderly man, the other of a woman. They were found in the Via Stabia among the ashes of the last eruption, evidently overtaken in their flight and buried among the cinders. According to the usual method employed to preserve the external appearance of objects, liquid plaster was poured into the cavity, which, serving as a mould, a facsimile of the forms was obtained; and, thus perfectly preserved, the statue-like bodies were placed in glass cases in the Pompeii Museum. While appreciating all the horror of such a death, and the suffering endured, as shown by the position of the limbs, one cannot but imagine what would have been the astonishment of that man and woman had some prophet informed them that eighteen hundred years after their death their forms, and even as much of their garments as

were not consumed in the eruption, would be placed in a museum for inspection by a multitude of sight-seers, some from lands the existence of which they had never dreamed of. The poor woman is lying on her face, and even the form of her hair, put up behind, is seen. One arm shields her forehead, and she is supported by the other. Her stony limbs are well formed, and traces of a garment are seen passing in folds around her. The man, although placed on his back in the exhibition, when found was turned on his side. One arm rests on his hip; the other is uplifted. The face is somewhat distorted, but massive and smoothly shaven. Even the form of the fastening of the sandals around the ankle, and of the long button higher up on the leg to hold them, is clearly seen. The limbs are partly drawn up. The skeleton of a tolerably large dog, also recently found, is in the Museum of Pompeii, his whole form preserved in plaster, in the same manner as those just mentioned. He is lying on his back, with his suffering, biting his hind leg. The rings in his collar are plainly seen.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

In the Church of Santa Maria at Bergamo on the 12th ult. the remains of Donizetti were entered with public honors.

An old opera bouffe, known as *Les Trois Epiciers*, which was first brought out in 1840, is soon to be revived at the Théâtre des Variétés.

SIR MICHAEL COSTA is travelling on the Continent in search of the best foreign artists for the opening of the National Opera House.

GOUNOD is devoting his attention to a new opera, in five acts, and the libretto of which is borrowed from one of Alexandre Dumas' novels, *Henri III. et sa Cour*.

The general lines of the new National Opera House on the Thames Embankment are like those of La Scala at Milan. The plan is an irregular parallelogram, and it really has four sides, three of which face roads.

E. L. DAVENPORT has been compelled to suspend his professional engagements in consequence of having sprained his wrist during a recent performance of "Macbeth" in Philadelphia. All of the *Hamlets* are apparently getting disabled, so as to give Signor Rossi a clear field.

SANTLEY is said by Kate Field to have refused to visit la Patti in her box at the Princess's Theatre, London, on the occasion of the presentation of an opera in which he was not singing. He sent word to her from his own box that he never put himself on exhibition in the corridors of the theatres in which he appeared.

FIFTY-FIVE pounds is the modest sum fixed by Herr Wagner as the price of a stall for the first performance of four-night opera, the *Nibelungen Ring*, at Bayreuth, next August. Thirty pounds is the price of the full score of the opera. Seventy-five pounds, besides travelling and hotel expenses, for four nights of music!

M. DUMAS has been enjoying himself in the country by working hard at his new drama, *Joseph Balsamo*. It does not in any way resemble the *Balsamo* of Dumas' father, but is constructed on "new and approved" principles. The *Odéon* is to receive the coveted work. The theatre will be splendid in decoration when it is reopened.

It is announced that an immense building will shortly be constructed in the Champs-Élysées where every species of distraction will be found united, such as concerts, theatrical representations, all kinds of games, &c. This is to be a sort of palace, resembling the Crystal Palace in London. An enterprise similar was undertaken in 1840, and met with complete failure.

PARIS is soon to possess the doubtful boon of another theatre devoted to the opera-bouffe and other kindred styles of the drama. In the shape of the new and pretty Salle Taitbout on the street of the same name. The company will be very strong, including among its female members Madame Céline Chaumont. The opening piece will probably be a new operetta, entitled *La Cruche Cassée*.

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