

## Practical Hints and Examination Papers.

—The following excellent advice has been given by Professor Douglass Hyde, of New Brunswick, in the matter of the study of French :

First. That any teaching which lays continually more stress upon points of grammar than upon familiarity with words and sentences is not recommendable, is not even natural, and is especially unsuited to the requirements of students in Canada, where we may at any moment fall in with French speakers.

Secondly. That a knowledge of words and phrases and of French, as it is used in the ordinary relations of life, is best acquired by plentiful reading of easy books, especially of story books.

Thirdly. That for this purpose some easy story-book, novel, or book of extracts (as interesting in its subject-matter as possible) should be chosen, with a glossary of words at the end to save the trouble of using a dictionary.

Fourthly. That a very little study of the grammar is sufficient to launch a pupil into an easy French text. Practically all he requires to know is the declension of nouns, of adjectives, and the conjugation of the regular verb. The conjugation of the irregular verbs can best be learned by hunting them up in a grammar according as they are met with.

Fifthly. That to learn the bare, dry rules of grammar apart from their connection with the text of some interesting book is drudgery for nothing. One of my students told me that she spent her third year at French in school "learning verbs." Needless to say she had forgotten the verbs and knew nothing else.

## MENTAL ARITHMETIC.

After several years' experience as a school examiner, I am led to believe that mental arithmetic has been quite neglected. Very few teachers who begin work in our schools know anything about Colburn's Mental Arithmetic or one equally as good. To pass as rapidly as possible from mental to written work seems to be the idea of the average teacher; and I have found that pupils resort to the use of pencils and paper to do what ought to be an easy mental act. They are not trained to do the work without pencils; and the training is what we need to change.

To see pupils determining that  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. is  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the base; or that 8 is 8-9 of 9, by some mechanical process, on slates or paper, is not unusual; and a large number of modern educators think that if a pupil states that 8 pounds of candy at 9 cts. a pound cost 72 cts. it is a sufficient solution. I do not think it is. I want that everlasting "why" answered.

How can we hope to improve this condition of things? By making mental arithmetic a part of our daily curriculum; by insisting on its