

THE STUDY OF GERMAN.

A new text-book has been introduced in the first year German lectures to replace Schmidt's German Guide. The fact that the latter is prescribed in the calendar for this session, prevented the professor from instituting the desired change, but the students of both sexes unanimously agreed to procure the new grammar at once. We think they were wise, as it is in many ways a great improvement on its predecessor. It is compiled by Professors Van der Smitten and Fraser, of University College, Toronto, and as the Modern Languages course of that institution is known to be particularly strong, one is not surprised to find the book practical, concise and comprehensive. The declensions, auxiliaries, and weak conjugation form the subject matter of the opening pages; the exercises are not so long as those of Schmidt,—who does not remember the hours spent over those interminable *Aufgaben*?—and the sentences for translation do not treat of "Little green nuts," and "Six good old women," but are judiciously selected for conversation; after each lesson is a short oral exercise, with the words in English type.

The German language is one with which every graduate should be conversant. Apart from being of service on the Continental trip so much in vogue with students of to-day, it constitutes the key to a mine of wealth—the German literature—a key that no doctors, scientists, literati, of either sex, can afford to be without. This change of text-books is a step in the right direction. We would like to see more interest taken in the subject at McGill. Last year, University College had an honour class in Modern Languages of about twenty-five; last year our Lansdowne Medal went begging. We would also like to see every student in German in the first rank at the sessional examination. This latter could be accomplished by a little individual effort on the part of each, for language, unlike some studies, does not require exceptional ability, but simply careful mastering of the groundwork, steady application and constant revision.

Mlle. Popelin has passed the law examination of the University of Brussels, and demands that her name be duly entered as a member of the Bar. The matter is to come before the courts for argument. This is the first time that the question has been raised in Europe, and there is much interest in the result.

The letter sent by Cardinal Gibbons and the American Bishops to the Pope, with reference to the Washington University, announces that \$3,000,000 has been collected for the new institution, and that the buildings are now going up. The Cardinal and bishops request the concession of academic privileges to the University, and ask the Pope's approval of its statutes.

E TENEBRIS LUX.

THE TRACHINIAE OF SOPHOCLES, 94-140.

I.

O sun! O blazing sun,
Whom night, star-glorious, dying brings to birth,
And, when the shades are gathering, fall to sleep,
Thee, I implore, to tell me where on earth,
On what far shore or island of the deep,
Dwelleth Alcmena's son. Thou, whose all-seeing eye
Nothing escapes, white'er is done
Tell me! O tell me, where is the beloved one?

II.

So, as a lonely bird for its lost brood
Laments uncomfited,
For Hercules doth Dejanira cry
(Whom once so many suitors sought to wed),
By yearning love subdued
And tearless with much sorrow. With the dread
Of some mishap to her long-absent lord,
She ever pines upon her widowed bed
She waits the awful word
That tells her of his doom.

III.

As when the strong blasts come
From north or south the billows ebb and flow
Unresting, o'er the wide expanse of seas,
So has thy life been, Theban Hercules,
Both child and man,—a scene of endless care.
And yet some god preserves thee from the foe
Who rules the realms of darkness and despair.

IV.

Therefore of grief's excess I disapprove,
And I will utter a far other diaphanous
Why cast away the hope of better things?
The son of Saturn, he who reigns above,
Granteth to none a life all free from pain.
But in due time to weary mortals brings
Sweet joy no less than sorrow,
And in the north the stars decline and rise.

V.

Nor night, nor gloomy woe, nor aught they prize
With mortals makes long stay, but to their eyes
One joy is present, absent on the morrow
But grief from joy may ever solace borrow—
Wherefore, my queen, take courage, knowing well
They, whom Heaven loves are safe where'er they dwell.

JOHN READE.

Contributions.

BURNS, FRANKLIN, JOHNSON.

In a letter to Dr. Moore, dated August 2nd, 1787, Robert Burns, while relating the incidents of his early life, writes:—"The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in, was 'The Vision of Mirza.'" After this, it is interesting to read the following passage at pp. 31-2 of "The Life of Dr. Franklin," by Mason L. Weems (6th Edit., Carey, Pa.):—"The next day, going into a fresh part of the town, he saw, at the side of the street, a little table spread out, and covered with a parcel of toys, among which lay an odd volume, with a neat old woman sitting by. As he approached the table to look at the book, the old lady, lifting on him a most pleasant countenance, said—'Well, my little man, do you ever dream dreams?' Ben, rather startled at so strange a salutation, replied that had dreamt in his time. 'Well,' said the old lady, 'I dreamed last night that a little man, just like you, came along here, and bought that old book of mine.' 'And pray, Madam, what do you ask for your old book?' 'Only fourpence-halfpenny,' said the old lady. 'Well, Madam,' continued Ben, 'as your dreaming shall turn out true, there's your money.' * * * * *