

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE PROBLEM OF HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION IN ONTARIO.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—Will you allow me space in your popular journal to refer to an interesting article on education in THE WEEK of July 10th, in which you suggest the feasibility of establishing a "national" system of education by substituting the study of science for the study of Greek? Now, sir, if you consider that of the half million of pupils in the public schools of the Province, only four in every hundred will ultimately be found in the high schools, you will see that your proposed science training will not be brought to bear on very many of those who occupy themselves with lumbering, fishing, mining, or agriculture. Again, if you consider that of the eighteen thousand pupils in the high schools of the Province, only seven out of every hundred are studying Greek, you will see that such a substitution as you propose will not increase materially the number of pupils studying science. In fact Greek is optional in Ontario both for departmental examinations and for university matriculation. Whatever evils, therefore, the neglect of Greek may be responsible for, the study of it can not be made answerable for the prevalent depression of industry and agriculture. With your permission, sir, I will state the problem of high school education in Ontario as it appears to me, and suggest a solution.

The end and aim of education is to make good citizens—good morally, intellectually and physically. State education must be of universal application; that is to say, it must be adapted for all alike. It cannot, therefore, as you propose, have "reference to the probable future calling" of any of those for whom it is intended without discriminating unfairly against all the rest. To consider, then, the intellectual side, what is that education which is adapted to all the citizens of Ontario alike? As to the best form of primary education, all are pretty well agreed that it should consist mainly of the three R's, though even here there are rumblings of discontent which seem to show that the third R—extended, as it is, into algebra and geometry—receives an undue amount of attention. The motive at this stage is utilitarian; no State can afford to have citizens who cannot "read and write and cast accounts."

With regard, also, to university education, there is a pretty general agreement that the curriculum should cover the whole field of knowledge, and that it should aim at extending scientific truth, and at imparting that acquaintance with "all the best that has been said and done" in the history of the race, which constitutes culture.

It is only when the best form of secondary or high school education comes up for discussion, that serious controversy arises. No attempt is made to shape our high school education in the interest of any particular class or calling, unless, indeed, it is in the interest of the future business man by the introduction of the so-called commercial subjects, none of which, however, is compulsory. It is, I think, generally conceded that the function of the high school is the promotion of national culture. The main point at issue is, what are the proper subjects of liberal study for our high school course? The difficulty is simply one of selection. There are three subjects, or groups of subjects, which the experience of educational experts has admitted into the high school curriculum. These are literature (with history), mathematics and science. Other subjects have been added, such as book-keeping, phonography, type-writing, telegraphy, etc., which do not fall under discussion, not being strictly educational, and being of value mainly to the future business man. But of the three subjects mentioned above—literature, mathematics and science—as constituting the staple of the high school curriculum, each one may be regarded as of high educational value. No further proof of this is required than the fact that each has so many enthusiastic advocates. Shall, then, all three be taught to all the pupils of our high schools? No culture that is worthy of the name can afford to ignore any one of them. How much, then, of each shall be taught? That will depend upon a pupil's intellectual aptitude. Some pupils have an aptitude for literature, some for mathematics and some for science. Should not each be allowed to follow his bent? But how can that bent be determined? By means of an elementary course in all three subjects, which shall be one and the same for all pupils alike. In this way, pupils with an aptitude for literature may be separated from pupils with an aptitude for science, and pupils with an aptitude for science from pupils with an aptitude for literature, and each pupil allowed and enabled to follow his special bent in a higher course provided for pupils with his special bent. The question of what literature should be read in the elementary course is only a question of detail. English would naturally form the staple of it, with a little Latin to lend accuracy to the study of English. The natural extension of the literature course would be into French and German literature, and its natural culmination the immortal literature of Greece. Such a bifurcation of the curriculum is more reasonable and symmetrical than our present one into ancient and modern literature. Literature is one and undivided; why should it be made as a house divided against itself? In the study of the great master-pieces of the literature of the past, we build our hopes for the literature of the future. From the wide and general study of

literature we may look for the development, in time, of a national literature.

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[The words "Greek" and "Science" were used epigrammatically and generically in the article referred to: the one as typical and representative of a cosmopolitical education—Prof. Freeman's essay referred to was entitled "Compulsory Greek"; the other as typical and representative of a national education as suited to a country in which material success is an important aim.—[ACTING ED.]

THE LATE BISHOP OF DURHAM AND THE AUTHOR OF "SUPERNATURAL RELIGION."

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—It seems to me that I have twice seen in THE WEEK references to the late Bishop of Durham's reply to the author of "Supernatural Religion" as something altogether crushing. Just how long ago the first occasion was, or who was responsible for the observation, I cannot remember. I have, however, before me at this moment "G. G.'s" notice of current theological literature in this week's number, where mention is made of "the fate" that overtook the author of "Supernatural Religion" when the "redoubtable bishop" took him in hand. Now what I beg leave to say is, that all competent critics do not consider that the author in question suffered much at the Bishop's hands. Let me quote from the important work of Professor Pfleiderer, of Berlin, lately published in England, under the title of "Development of Theology in Germany since Kant, and its Progress in England since 1825":—

"The answer which Lightfoot, the late Bishop of Durham, offered in the name of orthodoxy in a series of articles in the *Contemporary Review*, subsequently published as a book, is extraordinarily weak. Instead of calmly surrendering the outworks and establishing the claim of the Christian religion to be a revelation (which was the point called in question) by an appeal to its spiritual nature and its position in the whole course of history, by which means the solely negative standpoint of the author of 'Supernatural Religion' would have been successfully impugned, the short-sighted scholar found nothing better to do than to submit the author's examination of references in the Fathers to the Gospels to petty criticism; while, even if all the Bishop's deductions were correct, the general result of the author's enquiries would not be in any way altered. It is not surprising that, in his reply to Bishop Lightfoot, which has recently appeared, the author not only adheres to his historical positions as not upset, but also repeats his negative conclusions in a form of more pronounced antagonism. For his refutation, it needed other means than Bishop Lightfoot had at his command; it required a free, profound and far-seeing philosophical and historical defence of Christianity, as the growingly perfect stage of the religious development of humanity." Page 397.

When opinions as to the argumentative value of Bishop Lightfoot's work are being quoted the verdict, "extraordinarily weak," pronounced by so learned a critic as Professor Pfleiderer, certainly deserves consideration.

W. D. LESUEUR.

Ottawa, July 3, 1891.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

SEVERAL attempts to adapt "Lorna Doone" for the English stage having failed, Mr. Blackmore is himself going to try and put his famous story into a four-act play.

NEGOTIATIONS are in progress between Mrs. Langtry and George Keogh in regard to her reappearance in America the season after next. It is not yet certain whether she will come.

MR. HENRY JAMES' "American," which has been successfully produced as a play at Southport, England, is to be brought before the London public on September 26. Miss Elizabeth Robins, who has done so well in "Hedda Gabler," will play the leading female part.—*The Critic*.

THE engagement of Albani with Messrs. Abbey and Grau's French and Italian Grand Opera is now positively settled. After her engagement in the opera Albani will appear in concerts and oratorio throughout the United States and Canada, under the management of Mr. L. M. Ruben.

AMONG the novelties and important works of the coming Birmingham Triennial Festival are Dvorák's new "Requiem Mass," Prof. Villiers Stanford's dramatic oratorio "Eden," Dr. Mackenzie's "Veni, Creator Spiritus," Bach's Passion Music "St. Matthew," Berlioz's "Faust," and Dr. Parry's "Blest Pair of Sirens."

MISS KATE SANTLEY's Gaiety troupe's performance of "Faust Up To Date" does not please the Berlin people, who probably are not happy at seeing Goethe's work burlesqued. "In London," writes the censor of one journal, "where they eat roast beef and plum pudding, the success of the piece may be accounted for; but here in Berlin everything that may have excited laughter on the other side of the Channel is unintelligible; and as for the music of this opera, considerations of courtesy impose silence on the critic." So now we understand how much the success of the piece owes to our roast beef and plum pudding!—*Musical News*.

NOTHING could illustrate more strikingly the difference in taste existing between American and English audiences than the manner in which "A Night's Frolic," Mr. Edouin's latest venture, has been received here [London] and in the States. Even in Boston, which claims to be the intellectual "hub" of the universe, the piece has enjoyed the exceptionally long run of seven weeks to crowded houses—a circumstance referred to by the local press as "an intelligent tribute to an American playwright and to an artist (Miss Helen Barry) who has surrounded herself with a first-class company." Encouraged by the success, Miss Rose Coghlan is about to produce in New York another adaptation of the German original, while four different authors are angrily disputing for the honour of having written the version now being played at the Strand! Of serious work, however, the New York public has shown itself of recent times peculiarly intolerant, and plays which have received the stamp of public approval here have failed altogether to secure the favour of playgoers on the other side of the Atlantic. But now the current seems to be setting, although slowly, in another and more satisfactory direction. The movement may possibly also receive assistance from an unexpected quarter; for, says the *Dramatic Mirror*, "it is whispered that Mr. Henry Irving's visit to these shores this summer is not merely for pleasure, but with a view to canvassing the desirability of another American tour. Let it be hoped devoutly that rumour is correct in this instance. Mr. Irving's engagements always exercise a salutary effect upon public taste in this country." No higher compliment could, in truth, be paid to the enormous influence which Mr. Irving, by his energy, skill and ability, has gained wherever English plays are performed.—*St. James Gazette*.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

COMEDIES OF ALFRED DE MUSSET. Translated and Edited, with an Introduction, by S. L. Gwynn. London and New York: Walter Scott. (The Camelot Series, edited by Ernest Rhys.)

In a wonderful passage, such as only that unrivalled master of a certain style of liquid English prose could write, at the commencement of one of the chapters of "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," the chapter, namely, entitled "The Lamp of Memory," Mr. Ruskin points out that it is the memory or association of human events that lends one of the most powerful and fascinating charms to natural scenery; eliminate the human interest and the scene is deprived of a certain strong influencing factor. So it is with a translation. About all words there clings a memory, an association, a history, a true human interest; translate those words into another language, at once the charm is broken, something is wanting. In the original there was a hidden and a subtle force, an atmosphere unseen but felt, an underlying meaning unrevealed by the language as language, but still existing and recognized though indefinable. And the writer who knows best how to utilize this intangible and delicate though powerful ingredient is the writer gifted high above his fellows. This thought is strongly borne in upon one on reading these translations of four exquisite comedies of Alfred de Musset. What they lose in translation may perhaps best be comprehended if one imagines a garden in which the flowers are colourless and scentless: the forms are there, but the light and the scent are gone. Still there are so many to whom Alfred de Musset's garden is a *hortus inclusus*, that thanks are due to Mr. S. L. Gwynn for throwing open the gates, so that though readers of French lose nothing, readers of English only gain much. The four comedies translated are "Barberine," "Fantasio," "On ne badine pas avec l'Amour," and "Il faut qu'une Porte Soit ouverte ou fermée," and Mr. Gwynn's rendering of them is admirable. To very many readers this little collection will be a great boon, and one can only hope that not only will this fascinating French author be brought by the Camelot Series within the repertoire of lovers of *belles lettres* (in the peculiarly appropriate significations of that adjective and that noun) but others also of his contemporaries in one of the most interesting phases of French literary fervour.

ISAAC AND JACOB: THEIR LIVES AND TIMES. By Canon Rawlinson. New York: Anson Randolph and Company.

A fashion has set in of late years of issuing for popular use the biographies of eminent persons, who have distinguished themselves in public life. The series to which the present volume belongs has been projected by those who think that the lives of the great "Men of the Bible" should be found as useful and fascinating to the intelligent reader as the story of those who have won a conspicuous place in the annals of secular history. They believe that the "Men of the Bible" have as strong a claim on attention as the "Men of Letters," and "Men of Action," etc., to whose history public notice has of late been so often called. Canon Rawlinson, in this volume, gives us the story of Isaac and Jacob, their lives and times. His work is well done, and the lives of the two patriarchs are illustrated with the abundant materials furnished by the researches of modern travellers, and writers who have given special attention to the period.

Yet, after all, the impression left on the mind after reading such a work is far less vivid and abiding than that which is gained from the original Bible story. We