

*Notes and Comments.*

WE commence in this issue the answers to the algebraical problems for first-class A and B set in 1885. Mr. Miles Ferguson, the writer, was diffident in allowing us to insert them, but we feel confident that they will be highly appreciated by our readers.

PURISTS will see with alarm another word added to the English language. In the February number of the *Cosmopolitan Short-hander* is an article entitled "A Hint to Type-writers." The *Shorthand* apparently wavers between writer and writist, for in the same column appears the word "type-writers." But perhaps it considers that our vocabulary cannot be too large, be the additions what they may.

CANADIAN literature, if such a term is permissible, is giving signs of lively growth. Within a few days of each other have appeared recently two works of great merit, each destined to live long—Mr. Mair's "Tecumseh," and Major Boulton's "Reminiscences of the North-West Rebellions." We hope at an early date to put before our readers a lengthened review of each of these admirable books.

A COMMUNICATION has been received from the Education Department to the effect that reduced rates on railways and ocean steamships have been promised to those teachers intending to visit the Colonial and Indian Exhibition to be held in London, England, this year. Dr. May, representative of the Education Department in London, will be happy to render any assistance in his power to teachers on their arrival in the way of pointing out to them the best objects of interest to see and how best to see them. We hope to give next week full particulars in connexion with these plans, and also to insert articles giving practical hints and suggestions to guide those who are purposing spending a few weeks in London.

A CORRESPONDENT signing himself "Omega" writes to protest against what he describes as a "process of mental stuffing." He refers to the attempt to pass boys and girls through different examinations at comparatively early ages—through an entrance examination at ten and eleven years of age; through Third and Second Class at twelve and fourteen years of age; through First Class at fourteen and fifteen years of age. And he adds, "it is manifestly true that it is done chiefly by memory stuffing, not by good mental training. Is that the leading product of our educational system? This is one of those 'bad eminences' that I hope all true teachers will not strive for." He also enters a protest against the method of

examining in dictation by giving pupils misspelled words to correct.

DR. HODGINS added the following rider to his article on "Canadian National Homogeneity," which appeared in last week's issue. We gladly print it in these columns, and hope his remarks will be enhanced in value by gaining an interest peculiar to themselves:—

"Canada is rich in historic memories: Parkman's works; Stone's 'Brant and Sir William Johnson'; Ryerson's 'United Empire Loyalists'; 'Details of the War of 1812'; Richardson's 'Wacousta,' and 'Canadian Brothers'; Mair's 'Tecumseh'; and many other such works, are full of historical and heroic incidents. If properly presented to the pupil on fitting occasions they would exercise a powerful influence in promoting a good, healthy, national feeling throughout Canada."

A CORRESPONDENT writes to the *London Times* as follows:—Operations have been lately begun for the purpose of clearing away the mass of sand which has accumulated during centuries around the famous statue of the Sphinx. Brugsch Bey, brother of the distinguished Egyptologist, has charge of the work, which is being carried out according to a plan proposed by Signor Maspero, and will, it is expected, be finished by Easter. The portion of the statue at present above ground is about 30 feet. It is supposed that as much more, at least, is buried in the sand, and the amount of sand to be cleared away is estimated at 20,000 cubic metres. A small tramway is being constructed to carry away this mass of sand to a distance, and 150 laborers are employed on the task. When the statue has been laid bare to the level of the foundations a broad circular walk will be constructed around it, and a high wall will be built to guard against future encroachments of the sands of the desert.

THE supposed autograph of Shakespeare, said to have been discovered by a Mr. Gunther, the *Literary World* believes to be a copy of a signature in Shakespeare's will. It says:—"We had the privilege of examining a photograph of the thing some weeks ago, and at once recognized its close resemblance to the third signature on Shakespeare's will. On comparing it carefully with one of the engraved fac-similes of that signature, we saw that it was an extremely accurate reproduction thereof. Every letter and every stroke of every letter were minutely copied; and even the slight deviation from a straight line in the two words of the name (the *Shakespeare* being slightly "uphill") was perfectly imitated. It was evidently a fac-simile of that signature made not "with intent to deceive," but merely to give an idea of the poet's handwriting. No forger, unless he were more fool than knave,

would copy a well known autograph so exactly, for no man writes his name twice in just the same way. No two signatures of Shakespeare have anything more than a very general resemblance."

THE following statistics taken from a letter written by Mr. Bain, Librarian of the Free Library of Toronto, and read at a meeting of the Board, are interesting. Mr. Bains says: "I take the occasion of the first meeting of the committee to lay before you some facts that have exhibited themselves in the statistics of the past year, and the deductions which I have drawn from them. That the circulation during the past year has been unprecedented when the number of volumes in the library and the population of the city is considered. The following comparison will make this clear:—

	Circulation.	Readers.	No. of Vols.	Population.
Detroit.....	126,378	16,420	56,668	80,000
Cleveland ..	198,203	22,266	45,905	93,000
Cincinnati ..	209,438	16,362	150,126	217,000
Toronto....	266,730	11,854	41,286	87,000
Chicago.....	519,691	25,906	111,521	299,000

These figures, I think, show clearly that the desire for reading facilities was very great and fully justified the movement for the establishment of a public library. The fact also that the library was new and that many books which heretofore had been confined to a few private libraries were now thrown open for public use, aided very materially in bringing about this result."

"JUDGING," says *Education*, "from the record of popular education in foreign countries, there is no middle ground between strict religious neutrality in the schools and a perpetual conflict between church and state and church authorities. In England, as a result of recent elections, the ecclesiastical influence is in the ascendant in the school boards of London, Manchester and Sheffield. Thus far with the new boards, the first consideration seems to be 'the vested interests of the churches'; second, 'the objection of the ratepayers to increased expenditure'; and last, 'educational efficiency.' The *Daily News* and other London papers protest against the reaction policy. In Birmingham hot controversy has been excited over a proposition for religious instruction in the schools. The Rev. Dr. R. W. Dale, an advocate for strict neutrality, combats the proposition in a vigorous pamphlet. The Minister of Public Instruction in Austria, M. le Baron Conrad, who was objectionable to the clerical party, has given place to M. le Dr. Gautsch, who, while not strictly a clerical, is more acceptable to that party. In Holland the government has yielded to the demand of the Conservatives for a revision of the article of the Constitution relative to public instruction. The proposed text is in the interests of the clerical schools."