

## Notes and Comments.

*La Escuela Elemental* bears on its title-page a motto taken from Jules Simon's *L'École*, which is worth recording, and which is here retranslated from the Spanish: "The people that maintain the largest number of schools, and the best organized schools, is the greatest people of the world; if it is not the greatest to-day, it will be the greatest to-morrow."

"DON'T repeat the pupils' mistakes, especially not those in pronunciation and orthography." Such is the advice of an experienced French principal to his teachers. "It looks as if you were making fun of them, and they feel mortified. . . . What good will such repetitions do? They will simply fix in recollection the error which you wish to combat.—*Revue Pédagogique*."

SUPT. W. W. ROSS well says that, it is of prime importance that man should be a healthy animal. Every portion of the school machinery should be regulated so as to secure the best physical condition. Hygienic and sanitary knowledge are so essential to the public health that they demand constant attention, and should have a place in public instruction. Two hundred years ago the death rate in London was twice as large as it is now. It is said that it might be reduced to fifteen in a thousand if regard was paid to health. Public enlightenment is what is needed, and in the schools it should begin, for this and coming generations.

MRS. LUCIA STICKNEY, of Cincinnati, in a paper upon "Moral Instruction," says: "Though the schools are doing a grand, good work in training to habits of industry, promptness, honesty, kindness, and courtesy, still the failure to train the intelligence in regard to the responsibility which conscience imposes toward God and the universe, results in a surprising lack of appreciation of fundamental moral principles, especially among those who have no church nor home training. Hence many go out of our schools with no clear basis of moral judgment, and with very confused ideas of their own obligations. It is time for the discussions of the subject in teachers' conventions to take a more positive form; and for us to begin to desire more and larger ways and means to counteract the demoralizing influences in our great cities. It is time for church and school to stretch out their hands to each other for help in a work which neither can do alone."

ONE of the cleverest papers read before the New York State Teachers' Association at Niagara Falls was by Supt. W. J. Ballard of Jamaica. Mr. Ballard took with him a class of his girls, and they showed the association what sensible gymnastic exercises

are. There was no straining for exact time and taking movements. Their exercises were original and thoroughly scientific. No association or institute could have a better object lesson or a more convincing exposition of physical movements and how to teach them than by seeing Mr. Ballard's girls go through their physical exercises. We are not at all certain but it would pay for the state to hire him and his girls to visit all the institutes of this state, during the coming school year, and show by actual exhibition how perfectly possible practical and practicable physical drills in schools are, and how easily they may be introduced by any teacher possessed of a modicum of energy and common sense.—*New England Journal of Education*.

THE degree of B.A. and M.D. usually represent an appreciable amount of real attainment; but an M.A. in most colleges signifies, merely, that the recipient has managed to live one or three years after his graduation, and that he is able to invest five or ten dollars in the diploma. . . . A doctorate in divinity is frequently given to persons who do not pretend to be learned men in any proper sense of the word. To be rich, or eloquent, or influential; to be the pastor of a rich church, or even to be the favoured pastor of some single rich parishioner, often furnishes a sufficient motive to induce our college board to admit a man to the degree who has no other title to it. The doctorate in laws is somewhat more rarely conferred, but with hardly more regard for appropriateness. Any knowledge of law has long ceased to be essential. As a sign of literary attainment in general, it is by no means infallible. A successful politician, a good military officer, or a prominent civilian, often becomes the recipient, for reasons wholly aside from any literary merit. If some of our larger colleges would establish a rule rigidly demanding evidence of real merit as a condition for honorary degrees, the evil complained of would be abolished.—*New England Journal of Education*.

THE undue attention paid to classical education at the schools for the middle and higher classes will have, sooner or later, to be abandoned. Latin and Greek are entitled to an important and honourable place in a literary education, but they should not, as at present, virtually exclude the acquirement of a good knowledge of French and German. Boys, who are not going to continue their studies for a lengthened period, should not take up Latin and Greek; to gain anything like a good knowledge of classical literature requires many years' patient and diligent work, and the practical value of the result is by no means great. Boys brought up under the present system, and leaving school at the age of fifteen or sixteen know next to nothing; they are usually ignorant even of the Latin

and Greek to which they have devoted so much misapplied labour. During the same period, with proper instruction, they might have become fair French and German scholars. Our present head masters probably desire to perpetuate the present system, that under which they themselves were brought up, and which is most suited to their own acquirements, and they will not be likely to alter the existing curriculum, except under great pressure from public opinion. The literary work of an English school should consist mainly of English, French, and German. Boys whose parents intend to send them to a university may take up the noble literatures of ancient Greece and Rome in addition; but a large percentage will, even then, as at present, fail to become anything but the merest smatterers in Latin and Greek. Only boys exceptionally intelligent and industrious will ever, under any circumstances, become really good classical scholars.—*From Scribner's Magazine*.

How to Read and What to Read are questions which should be carefully considered. To read, simply to pass away the time, or only in order to be able to say, "I have read" this or that, is not only a waste of time, but is also a ruinous habit. First, then, reading should be done carefully, thoughtfully, critically, and with a definite and worthy object in view, to secure that which will be of most practical use. But, with access to thousands of volumes of excellent brain food on the shelves of our college libraries, how can the student, whose spare time is very limited, determine which books will give him the best returns for his perusal? What student has not begun a school-year with the determination to make the best of his library privileges, and yet, his mind, finding so much to feed on, became bewildered, and famished in the midst of abundance? This is too often the case. Others, rather than seek for something substantial, content themselves with the latest popular novel. To be sure, there are many novels worth reading, and that give the mind a wholesome recreation, but to resort to second-class, sensational novels alone, abnormally develops the emotional powers, and prevents the mind from exercising that control over its own thoughts, which is one of the primary aims of education. This being the case, would it not be wise for college faculties to mark out courses of reading in the various departments of learning? One student has a taste for Natural Science, another for Literature, another for History, still another for Philosophy, and so on. These natural tastes should be satisfied. With a little thought, mature minds could easily arrange such courses of reading, which would both help to form a proper habit of reading, and be a valuable supplement to the work laid down in the college curriculum.