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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK JOHN BULL, JUNIOR; OR, FRENCH AS SHE IS TRADUCED ***

John Bull, Junior

MAX O'RELL

John Bull, Junior

OR

FRENCH AS SHE IS TRADUCED

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"JOHN BULL AND HIS ISLAND," ETC.

WITH A PREFACE BY
GEORGE C. EGGLESTON

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED
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PREFACE.

It must be that a too free association with American men of letters has moved the author of this book to add to his fine Gallic wit a touch of that preposterousness which is supposed to be characteristic of American humor.

For proof of this, I cite the fact that he has asked me to introduce him upon this occasion. Surely there could be no more grotesque idea than that any word of mine can serve to make Max O'Rell better known than he is to the great company of American readers.

Have not the pirate publishers already introduced him to all Americans who care for literature? Have not their translators done their best, not only to bring his writings to the attention of readers, but also to add to the sparkle and vivacity of his books by translating into them many things not to be found in the French originals? These generous folk, who have thus liberally supplemented his wit with flashes of their own stupidity, have treated his text after the manner of a celebrated Kentuckian of whom it was written that his love of truth was so great that he gave his entire time and attention to the task of ornamenting and adding to it.

But with all their eagerness to render interested service to a distinguished man of letters who was not then here to look after his own affairs, the pirates missed this, the best of his books; and finding that no surreptitious edition of it has appeared in this country, the author has felt himself privileged to re-write it and make such changes in it and additions to it as his own judgment has suggested without the prompting of voluntary assistants, and even to negotiate with a publisher for the issue of an edition on his own account.

I have called this work the best of Max O'Rell's books, and I think the reader will approve the judgment. Here, as in all that this author has written, there is a biting wit, which saturates the serious substance as good, sharp vinegar pervades a pickle; but here, as elsewhere, the main purpose is earnest, and the wit is but an aid to its accomplishment. A very wise and distinguished educator has declared that "the whole theory of education is to be extracted from these humorous sketches," and the story goes—whether Max O'Rell will vouch for its accuracy or not, I do not venture to say—that the head boy of St. Paul's School in London, after hearing the sketches read in public, said: "We boys enjoyed the lecture immensely, but *that fellow knows too much about us.*"

With a tremor of apprehension, we reflect that Max O'Rell's period of observation among ourselves will presently end, and that when he comes to record the result in his peculiar fashion, we are likely to echo that school-boy's plaint. But at any rate we shall know our own features better after we have contemplated them in his mirror; and, meantime, those of us who have enjoyed his acquaintance are disposed earnestly to hope that a guest whom we have learned to esteem so warmly may not think quite so ill of the American character as the barbaric condition of our laws respecting literary property would warrant.

GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON.

NEW YORK, February, 1888.

INTRODUCTION.

A Word to the Reader and another to the Critic.

To write a book in a foreign tongue is risky, and I had better at once ask for indulgence.

The many scenes and reminiscences belong to England, and, if translated into French, the anecdotes and conversations would lose much of whatever flavour and interest there may be in them.

This is my reason for not having written this book in French. Let my reason be also my apology.

*
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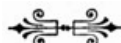
If any of my readers should feel inclined to think my review of British school-boys somewhat critical, let them take it for granted that when I was a boy I was everything that was good.

*
**

Now, gentle American Critic, whose magnanimity is proverbial, before thou abusest this little book, reflect how thou wouldst feel if thy Editor were to bid thee write thy criticism in French.

MAX O'RELL.

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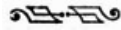
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I.

I AM BORN. — I AM DEEPLY IN LOVE. — I WISH TO BE AN ARTISTE, BUT MY FATHER USES STRONG ARGUMENT AGAINST IT. — I PRODUCE A DRAMATIC CHEF-D'ŒUVRE. — PARISIAN MANAGERS FAIL TO APPRECIATE IT. — I PUT ON A BEAUTIFUL UNIFORM. — THE CONSEQUENCE OF IT. — TWO EPISODES OF THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR. — THE COMMUNE EXPLAINED BY A COMMUNIST. — A "GLORIOUS" CAREER CUT SHORT. — I TAKE A RESOLUTION, AND A TICKET TO LONDON.

I was born on the —

But this is scarcely a "recollection" of mine.



At twelve I was deeply in love with a little girl of my own age. Our servants were friends, and it was in occasional meetings of these girls in the public gardens of my little native town that my chief chance of making love to Marie lay. Looking back on this little episode in my life, I am inclined to think that it afforded much amusement to our attendants. My love was too deep for words; I never declared my flame aloud. But, oh, what a fluttering went on under my small waistcoat every time I had the ineffable pleasure of a nod from her, and what volumes of love I put into my bow as I lifted my cap and returned her salute! We made our first communion on the same day. I was a pupil of the organist, and it was arranged that I should play a short piece during the Offertory on that occasion. I had readily acquiesced in the proposal. Here was my chance of declaring myself; through the medium of the music I could tell her all my lips refused to utter. She must be moved, she surely would understand.

Whether she did or not, I never had the bliss of knowing. Shortly after that memorable day, my parents removed from the country to Paris. The thought of seeing her no more nearly broke my heart, and when the stage-coach reached the top of the last hill from which the town could be seen, my pent-up feelings gave way and a flood of tears came to my relief.

The last time I visited those haunts of my childhood, I heard that "little Marie" was the mamma of eight children. God bless that mamma and her dear little brood!



At fifteen I was passionately fond of music, and declared to my father that I had made up my mind to be an artiste.

My father was a man of great common sense and few words: he administered to me a sound thrashing, which had the desired effect of restoring my attentions to Cicero and Thucydides.

It did not, however, altogether cure me of a certain yearning after literary glory.

For many months I devoted the leisure, left me by Greek version and Latin verse, to the production of a drama in five acts and twelve tableaux.

For that matter I was no exception to the rule. Every French school-boy has written, is writing, or will write a play.



My drama was a highly moral one of the sensational class. Blood-curdling, horrible, terrible, savage, weird, human, fiendish, fascinating, irresistible—it was all that. I showed how, even in this world, crime, treachery, and falsehood, though triumphant for a time, must in the long run have their day of reckoning. Never did a modern Drury Lane audience see virtue more triumphant and vice more utterly confounded than the Parisians would have in my play, if only the theatrical directors had not been so stupid as to refuse my *chef-d'œuvre*.

For it was refused, inconceivable as it seemed to me at the time.

The directors of French theatres are accustomed to send criticisms of the plays which "they regret to be unable to accept."

The criticism I received from the director of the Ambigu Theatre was, I thought, highly encouraging.

"My play," it appeared, "showed no experience of the stage; but it was full of well-conceived scenes and happy *mots*, and was written in excellent French. Horrors, however, were too piled up, and I seemed to have forgotten that spectators should be allowed time to take breath and wipe away their tears."

I was finally advised not to kill all my *dramatis personæ* in my next dramatic production, as it was customary for one of them to come forward and announce the name of the author at the end of the first performance.

Although this little bit of advice appeared to me not altogether free from satire, there was in the letter more praise than I had expected, and I felt proud and happy. The letter was passed round in the class-room, commented upon in the playground, and I was so excited that I can perfectly well remember how I forgot to learn my repetition that day, and how I got forty lines of the *Ars Poetica* to write out five times.

What a take-down, this imposition upon a budding dramatic author!

*
**

Examinations to prepare compelled me for some time to postpone all idea of astonishing the Paris playgoers with a "new and original" drama.

I took my B.A. at the end of that year, and my B.Sc. at the end of the following one. Three years later I was leaving the military school with the rank of sub-lieutenant.

My uniform was lovely; and if I had only had as much gold in my pockets as on my shoulders, sleeves, and breast, I think I ought to have been the happiest being on earth.

The proudest day of a young French officer's life is the day on which he goes out in the street for the first time with all his ironmongery on, his moustache curled up, his cap on his right ear, his sabre in his left hand. The soldiers he meets salute him, the ladies seem to smile approvingly upon him; he feels like the conquering hero of the day; all is bright before him; battles only suggest to him victories and promotions.

On the first day, his mother generally asks to accompany him, and takes his arm. Which is the prouder of the two? the young warrior, full of confidence and hope, or the dear old lady who looks at the passers-by with an air that says: "This is my son, ladies and gentlemen. As for you, young ladies, he can't have all of you, you know."

Poor young officer! dear old mother! They little knew, in 1869, that in a few months one would be lying in a military hospital on a bed of torture, and the other would be wondering for five mortal months whether her dear and only child was dead, or prisoner in some German fortress.

*
**

On the 19th of July, 1870, my regiment left Versailles for the Eastern frontier.

As in these pages I simply intend to say how I came to make the acquaintance of English school-boys, it would be out of place, if not somewhat pretentious, to make use of my recollections of the Franco-Prussian War.

Yet I cannot pass over two episodes of those troublous times.

*
**

I was twelve years of age when I struck up a friendship with a young Pole, named Gajeski, who was in the same class with me. We became inseparable chums. Year after year we got promoted at the same time. We took our degrees on the same days, entered the military school in the same year, and received our commissions in the same regiment.

We took a small *appartement de garçon* at Versailles, and I shall never forget the delightful evenings we spent together while in garrison there. He was a splendid violinist, and I was a little of a pianist.

Short, fair, and almost beardless, Gajeski was called the "Petit Lieutenant" by the soldiers, who all idolized him.

At the battle of Wörth, after holding our ground from nine in the morning till five in the evening, against masses of Prussian troops six times as numerous as our own, we were ordered to charge the enemy, with some other cavalry regiments, in order to protect the retreat of the bulk of the army.

A glance at the hill opposite convinced us that we were ordered to go to certain death.

My dear friend grasped my hand, as he said with a sad smile: "We shall be lucky if we get

our bones out of this, old fellow."

Down the hill we went like the wind, through a shower of bullets and *mitraille*. Two minutes later, about two-thirds of the regiment reached the opposite ascent. We were immediately engaged in a desperate hand-to-hand fight. A scene of hellish confusion it was. But there, amidst the awful din of battle, I heard Gajeski's death-cry, as he fell from his horse three or four yards from me, and I saw a horrible gash on his fair young head.

The poor boy had paid France for the hospitality she had extended to his father.

I fought like a madman, seeing nothing but that dear mutilated face before my eyes. I say "like a madman," for it was not through courage or bravery. In a *mélée* you fight like a madman—like a savage.

I had no brother, but he had been more than a brother to me. I had had no other companion or friend, but he was a friend of a thousand.

Poor fellow!



I had been in captivity in a stronghold on the Rhine for five months, when the preliminaries of peace were signed between France and Germany in January, 1871, and the French prisoners were sent back to their country.

About five hundred of us were embarked at Hamburg on board one of the steamers of the Compagnie Transatlantique, and landed at Cherbourg.

Finding myself near home, I immediately asked the general in command of the district for a few days' leave, to go and see my mother.

Since the day I had been taken prisoner at Sedan (2d of September, 1870), I had not received a single letter from her, as communications were cut off between the east and the west of France; and I learned later on that she had not received any of the numerous letters I had written to her from Germany.

This part of Normandy had been fortunate enough to escape the horrors of war, but, for months, the inhabitants had had to lodge soldiers and militia-men.

At five o'clock on a cold February morning, clothed, or rather covered, in my dirty, half-ragged uniform, I rang the bell at my mother's house.

Our old servant appeared at the attic window, and inquired what I wanted.

"Open the door," I cried; "I am dying of cold."

"We can't lodge you here," she replied; "we have as many soldiers as we can accommodate—there is no room for you. Go to the Town Hall, they will tell you we are full."

"*Sapristi*, my good Fanchette," I shouted, "don't you know me? How is mother?"

"Ah! It is Monsieur!" she screamed. And she rushed down, filling the house with her cries: "Madame, madame, it is Monsieur; yes, I have seen him, he has spoken to me, it is Monsieur."

A minute after I was in my mother's arms.

Was it a dream?

She looked at me wildly, touching my head to make sure I was at her side, in reality, alive; when she realized the truth she burst into tears, and remained speechless for some time. Such scenes are more easily imagined than described, and I would rather leave it to the reader to supply all the exclamations and interrogations that followed.



I could only spend two days at home, as my regiment was being organized in Paris, and I had to join it.

On the 18th of March, 1871, the people of Paris, in possession of all the armament that had been placed in their hands to defend the French capital against the Prussians, proclaimed the Commune, and, probably out of a habit just lately got into by the French army, we retreated to Versailles, leaving Paris at the mercy of the Revolutionists.

This is not the place to account for this revolution.

An explanation of it, which always struck me as somewhat forcible, is the one given by a Communist prisoner to a captain, a friend of mine, who was at the time acting as *juge*

d'instruction to one of the Versailles courts-martial.

"Why did you join the Commune?" he asked a young and intelligent-looking fellow who had been taken prisoner behind some barricade.

"Well, captain, I can hardly tell you. We were very excited in Paris; in fact, off our heads with rage at having been unable to save Paris. We had a considerable number of cannon and ammunition, which we were not allowed to use against the Prussians. We felt like a sportsman who, after a whole day's wandering through the country, has not had an opportunity of discharging his gun at any game, and who, out of spite, shoots his dog, just to be able to say on returning home that he had killed something."

*
**

On the 14th of April, 1871, my regiment received the order to attack the Neuilly bridge, a formidable position held by the Communists.

What the Prussians had not done some compatriot of mine succeeded in doing. I fell severely wounded.

After my spending five months in the Versailles military hospital, and three more at home in convalescence, the army surgeons declared that I should no longer be able to use my right arm for military purposes, and I was granted a lieutenant's pension, which would have been just sufficient to keep me in segars if I had been a smoker.

But of this I do not complain. Poor France! she had enough to pay!

*
**

At the end of the year of grace, 1871, my position was very much like that of my beloved country: all seemed lost, *fors l'honneur*.

Through my friends, however, I was soon offered a choice between two "social positions."

The first was a colonel's commission in the Egyptian army (it seemed that the state of my right arm was no objection).

I was to draw a very good salary. My friends in Cairo, however, warned me that salaries were not always paid very regularly, but sometimes allowed to run on till cash came into the Treasury. It was during the good times of Ismail Pacha. This made me a little suspicious that my salary might run on so fast that I should not be able to catch it.

The other post offered me was that of London correspondent to an important Parisian newspaper.

*
**

I had had enough of military "glory" by this time. Yet the prospect of an adventurous life is always more or less fascinating at twenty-three years of age.

Being the only child of a good widowed mother, I thought I would take her valuable advice on the subject.

I am fortunate in having a mother full of common sense. With her French provincial ideas, she was rather startled to hear that a disabled lieutenant could all at once become an active colonel. She thought that somehow the promotion was too rapid.

Alas! she, too, had had enough of military "glory."

Her advice was to be followed, for it was formulated thus: "You speak English pretty well; we have a good many friends in England; accept the humbler offer, and go to England to earn an honest living."

This is how I was not with Arabi Pacha on the wrong side at Tel-el-Kebir, and how it became my lot to make one day the acquaintance of the British school-boy of whom I shall have more to say by-and-by.

*
**

On the 8th of July, 1872, I took the London train at the *Gare du Nord*, Paris.

Many relations and friends came to the station to see me off. Some had been in England, some had read books on England, but all seemed to know a great deal about it. Advice, cautions, suggestions, were poured into my ears.

"Be sure you go and see Madame Tussaud's to-morrow," said one.

"Now," said another, "when you get to Charing Cross, don't fail to try and catch hold of a fellow-passenger's coat, and hold fast till you get to your hotel. The fog is so thick in the evening that the lamp-lights are of no use, you know."

All information is valuable when you start for a foreign country. But I could not listen to more. Time was up.

I shook hands with my friends and kissed my relations, including an uncle and two cousins of the sterner sex. This will sound strange to English or American ears. Well, it sounds just as strange to mine, now.

I do not know that a long residence in England has greatly improved me (though my English friends say it has), but what I do know is, that I could not now kiss a man, even if he were a bequeathing uncle ready to leave me all his money.

II.

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF A FRENCHMAN IN SEARCH OF A SOCIAL POSITION IN ENGLAND.

ARRIVAL AT CHARING CROSS. — I HAVE NOTHING TO DECLARE TO THE EXCISEMAN BUT LOW SPIRITS. — DIFFICULTY IN FINDING A GOOD RESIDENCE. — BOARD AND LODGING. — A HOUSE WITH CREEPERS. — THINGS LOOK BAD. — THINGS LOOK WORSE. — THINGS LOOK CHEERFUL.

8th July, 1872.

8.30 P.M.—Landed at Folkestone. The London train is ready. The fog is very thick. I expected as much. My English traveling companions remark on it, and exclaim that "this is most unusual weather." This makes me smile.

10.15 P.M.—The train crosses the Thames. We are in London. This is not my station, however, I am told. The train restarts almost immediately, and crosses the river again. Perhaps it takes me back to Paris. Hallo! how strange! the train crosses another river.

"This is a town very much like Amsterdam," I say to my neighbor.

He explains to me the round taken by the South-Eastern trains from Cannon Street to Charing Cross.

10.25 P.M.—Charing Cross! At last, here I am. The luggage is on the platform. I recognize my trunk and portmanteau.

A tall official addresses me in a solemn tone:

"Have you any thing to declare?"

"Not any thing."

"No segars, tobacco, spirits?"

"No segars, no tobacco."

My spirits were so low that I thought it was useless to mention them.

In France, in spite of this declaration of mine, my luggage would have been turned inside out. The sturdy Briton takes my word [1] and dismisses my luggage with:

"All right. Take it away."

11 P.M.—I alight at an hotel near the Strand. A porter comes to take my belongings.

"I want a bedroom for the night," I say.

"*Très bien, monsieur.*"

He speaks French. The hotel is French, too, I see.

After a wash and brush-up, I come down to the dining-room for a little supper.

I do not like the look of the company.

They may be French, and this is a testimonial in their favor, but I am afraid it is the only one.

Three facetious bagmen exercise their wit by puzzling the waiter with low French slang.

I think I will remove from here to-morrow.

I go to my bedroom, and try to open the window and have a look at the street. I discover the trick.

How like guillotines are these English windows!

I pull up the bottom part of mine, and look out. This threatening thing about my neck makes me uncomfortable. I withdraw.

English windows are useful, no doubt, but it is evident that the people of this country do not use them to look out in the street and have a quiet chat *à la française*.

Probably the climate would not allow it.

*
**

9th July, 1872.

A friend comes to see me. He shares my opinion of the French hotel, and will look for a comfortable apartment in an English house for me. We breakfast together, and I ask him a thousand questions.

He knows every thing, it seems, and I gather valuable information rapidly.

He prepares a programme of sight-seeing which it will take me a good many days to work through.

The weather is glorious.

My boxes are packed and ready to be removed—to-night, I hope.

Will pay my first visit to the British Museum.

I hail a cab in Regent Circus.

"Is the British Museum far from here?" I cry to the man seated on a box behind.

"No, sir; I will take you there for a shilling," he replies.

"Oh! thank you; I think I will walk then."

Cabby retires muttering a few sentences unintelligible to me. Only one word constantly occurring in his harangue can I remember.

I open my pocket-dictionary.

Good heavens! What have I said to the man? What has he taken me for? Have I used words conveying to his mind any intention of mine to take his precious life? Do I look ferocious? Why did he repeatedly call me *sanguinaire*? Must have this mystery cleared up.

10th July, 1872.

An English friend sets my mind at rest about the little event of yesterday. He informs me that the adjective in question carries no meaning. It is simply a word that the lower classes have to place before each substantive they use in order to be able to understand each other.

*
**

11th July, 1872.

Have taken apartments in the neighborhood of Baker Street. My landlady, *qui frise ses cheveux et la cinquantaine*, enjoys the name of Tribble. She is a plump, tidy, and active-looking little woman.

On the door there is a plate, with the inscription,

"J. Tribble, General Agent."

Mr. Tribble, it seems, is not very much engaged in business.

At home he makes himself useful.

It was this gentleman, more or less typical in London, whom I had in my mind's eye as I once wrote:

"The English social failure of the male sex not unfrequently entitles himself *General Agent*: this is the last straw he clutches at; if it should break, he sinks, and is heard of no more, unless his wife come to the rescue, by setting up a lodging-house or a boarding-school for

young ladies. There, once more in smooth water, he wields the blacking-brush, makes acquaintance with the knife-board, or gets in the provisions. In allowing himself to be kept by his wife, he feels he loses some dignity; but if she should adopt any airs of superiority over him, he can always bring her to a sense of duty by beating her."

*
**

12th July, 1872.

Mr. Tribble helps take up my trunks. On my way to bed my landlady informs me that her room adjoins mine, and if I need any thing in the night I have only to ask for it.

This landlady will be a mother to me, I can see.

The bed reminds me of a night I passed in a cemetery, during the Commune, sleeping on a gravestone. I turn and toss, unable to get any rest.

Presently I had the misfortune to hit my elbow against the mattress.

A knock at the door.

"Who is there?" I cry.

"Can I get you any thing, sir? I hope you are not ill," says a voice which I recognize as that of my landlady.

"No, why?"

"I thought you knocked, sir."

"No. Oh! I knocked my elbow against the mattress."

"Ah! that's it. I beg your pardon."

I shall be well attended here, at all events.

*
**

13th July, 1872.

The table here is not *recherché*; but twelve months' campaigning have made me tolerably easy to please.

What would not the poor Parisians have given, during the Siege in 1870, for some of Mrs. Tribble's obdurate poultry and steaks!

*
**

19th July, 1872.

I ask Mrs. Tribble for my bill.

I received it immediately; it is a short and comprehensive one:

| | £ | s. | d. |
|-------------------|----|----|----|
| Board and Lodging | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| Sundries | 1 | 13 | 6 |
| Total | £6 | 18 | 6 |

I can understand "lodging"; but "board" is a new word to me. I like to know what it is I have to pay for, and I open my dictionary.

"Board (subst.), *planche*."

Planche! Why does the woman charge me for a *planche*? Oh! I have it—that's the bed, of course.

My dictionary does not enlighten me on the subject of "Sundries."

I make a few observations to Mrs. Tribble on the week's bill. This lady explains to me that she has had great misfortunes, that Tribble hardly does any work, and does not contribute a penny toward the household expenses. When he has done a little stroke of business, he takes a holiday, and only reappears when his purse is empty.

I really cannot undertake to keep Tribble in *dolce far niente*, and I give Mrs. Tribble notice to leave.

*
**

20th July, 1872.

9 A.M.—I read in this morning's paper the following advertisement:

"Residence, with or without board, for a gentleman, in a healthy suburb of London. Charming house, with creepers, large garden; cheerful home. Use of piano, etc."

"Without board" is what I want. Must go and see the place.

6 P.M.—I have seen the house with creepers, and engaged a bedroom and sitting-room. Will go there to-night. My bed is provided with a spring mattress. Won't I sleep to-night, that's all!

*
**

21st July, 1872.

I remove my goods and chattels from the charming house. I found the creepers were inside.

It will take me a long time to understand English, I am afraid.

*
**

8th August, 1872.

I examine my financial position. I came to England with fifty pounds; have been here thirty days, and have lived at the rate of a pound a day. My money will last me only twenty days longer. This seems to be a simple application of the rule of three.

The thought that most Lord-Mayors have come to London with only half-a-crown in their pockets comforts me. Still I grow reflective.

25th September, 1872.

I can see that the fee I receive for the weekly letter I send to my Parisian paper will not suffice to keep me. Good living is expensive in London. Why should I not reduce my expenses, and at the same time improve my English by teaching French in an English school as resident master? This would enable me to wait and see what turn events will take.

I have used my letters of recommendation as a means of obtaining introductions in society, and my pride will not let me make use of them again for business.

I will disappear for a time. When my English is more reliable, perhaps an examination will open the door of some good berth to me.

*
**

3rd October, 1872.

Received this morning an invitation to be present at a meeting of the Teachers' Association.

Came with a friend to the Society of Arts, where the meeting is held in a beautiful hall, and presided over by Canon Barry.

What a graceful and witty speaker!

He addresses to private school-masters a few words on their duty.

"Yours," he says, "is not only a profession, it is a vocation, I had almost said a ministry" (hear, hear), "and the last object of yours should be to make money."

This last sentence is received with rapturous applause. The chairman has evidently expressed the feeling of the audience.

The Canon seems to enjoy himself immensely.

Beautiful sentiments! I say to myself. Who will henceforth dare say before me, in France, that England is not a disinterested nation? Yes, I will be a school-master; it is a noble profession.

A discussion takes place on the merits of private schools. A good deal of abuse is indulged in at the expense of the public schools.

I inquire of my friend the reason why.

My friend is a sceptic. He says that the public schools are overflowing with boys, and that if they did not exist, many of these private school-masters would make their fortune.

I bid him hold his wicked tongue. He ought to be ashamed of himself.

The meeting is over. The orators, with their speeches in their hands, besiege the press reporters' table. I again apply to my friend for the explanation of this.

He tells me that these gentlemen are trying to persuade the reporters to insert their speeches in their notes, in the hope that they will be reproduced in to-morrow's papers, and thus advertise their names and schools.

My friend is incorrigible. I will ask him no more questions.

*
**

4th October, 1872.

There will be some people disappointed this morning, if I am to believe what my friend said yesterday. I have just read the papers. Under the heading "Meeting of the Teachers' Association," I see a long report of yesterday's proceedings at the Society of Arts. Canon Barry's speech alone is reproduced.

*
**

24th May, 1873.

For many months past, M. Thiers has carried the Government with his resignation already signed in his frockcoat pocket.

"Gentlemen," he has been wont to say in the Houses of Parliament, "such is my policy. If you do not approve it, you know that I do not cling to power; my resignation is here in my pocket, and I am quite ready to lay it on the table if you refuse me a vote of confidence."

I always thought that he would use this weapon once too often.

A letter, just received from Paris, brings me the news of his overthrow and the proclamation of Marshal MacMahon as President of the Republic.

*
**

28th May, 1873.

The editor of the French paper, of which I have been the London correspondent for a few months, sends me a check, with the sad intelligence that one of the first acts of the new Government has been to suppress our paper.

Things are taking a gloomy aspect, and no mistake.

*
**

12th June, 1873.

To return to France at once would be a retreat, a defeat. I will not leave England, at any rate, before I can speak English correctly and fluently. I could manage this when a child; it ought not to take me very long to be able to do the same now.

I pore over the *Times* educational advertisements every day.

Have left my name with two scholastic agents.

25th June, 1873.

I have put my project into execution, and engaged myself in a school in Somersetshire.

The post is not a brilliant one, but I am told that the country is pretty, my duties light, and that I shall have plenty of time for reading.

I buy a provision of English books, and mean to work hard.

In the mean time, I write to my friends in France that I am getting on swimmingly.

I have always been of the opinion that you should run the risk of exciting the envy rather than the pity of your friends, when you have made up your mind not to apply to them for a five-pound note.

★
★★

(M—, Somerset.) 2d August, 1873.

Arrived here yesterday. Find I am the only master, and expected to make myself generally useful. My object is to practice my English, and I am prepared to overlook many annoyances.

Woke up this (Sunday) morning feeling pains all over. Compared to this, my bed at Mrs. Tribble's was one of roses. I look round. In the corner I see a small washstand. A chair, a looking-glass six inches square hung on the wall, and my trunk, make up the furniture.

I open the window. It is raining a thick, drizzling rain. Not a soul in the road. A most solemn, awful solitude. Horrible! I make haste to dress. From a little cottage, on the other side of the road, the plaintive sounds of a harmonium reach me. I sit on my bed and look at my watch. Half an hour to wait for my breakfast. The desolate room, this outlook from the window, the whole accompanied by the hymn on the harmonium, are enough to drive me mad. Upon my word, I believe I feel the corner of my eye wet. Cheer up, boy! No doubt this is awful, but better times will come. Good heavens! You are not banished from France. With what pleasure your friends will welcome you back in Paris! In nine hours, for a few shillings, you can be on the Boulevards.

Breakfast is ready. It consists of tea and bread and butter, the whole honored by the presence of Mr. and Mrs. R. I am told that I am to take the boys to church. I should have much preferred to go alone.

On the way to church we met three young ladies—the Squire's daughters, the boys tell me. They look at me with a kind of astonishment that seems to me mixed with scorn. This is probably my fancy. Every body I meet seems to be laughing at me.

20th August, 1873.

Am still at M., teaching a little French and learning a good deal of English.

Mrs. R. expresses her admiration for my fine linen, and my wardrobe is a wonder to her. From her remarks, I can see she has taken a peep inside my trunk.

Received this morning a letter from a friend in Paris. The dear fellow is very proud of his noble ancestors, and his notepaper and envelopes are ornamented with his crest and crown. The letter is handed to me by Mrs. R., who at the same time throws a significant glance at her husband. I am a mysterious person in her eyes, that is evident. She expresses her respect by discreetly placing a boiled egg on my plate at breakfast. This is an improvement, and I return thanks *in petto* to my noble friend in Paris.

★
★★

22nd August, 1873.

Whatever may be Mr. R.'s shortcomings, he knows how to construct a well-filled time-table.

I rise at six.

From half-past six to eight I am in the class-room seeing that the boys prepare their lessons.

At eight I partake of a frugal breakfast.

From half-past eight till half-past nine I take the boys for a walk.

From half-past nine till one I teach more subjects than I feel competent to do, but I give satisfaction.

At one I dine.

At five minutes to two I take a bell, and go in the fields, ringing as hard as I can to call the boys in.

From two to four I teach more subjects than—(I said that before).

After tea I take the boys for a second walk.

My evenings are mine, and I devote them to study.

★
★★

23rd August, 1873.

Mr. R. proposes that I should teach two or three new subjects. I am ready to comply with his wishes; but I sternly refuse to teach *la valse à trois temps*.

He advises me to cane the boys. This also I refuse to do.

*
**

15th September, 1873.

I cannot stand this life any longer. I will return to France if things do not take a brighter turn.

I leave Mr. R. and his "Dotheboys Hall."

At the station I meet the clergyman. He had more than once spoken to me a few kind words. He asks me where I am going.

"To London, and to Paris next, I hope," I reply.

"Are you in a hurry to go back?"

"Not particularly; but——"

"Well, will you do my wife and myself the pleasure of spending a few days with us at the Vicarage? We shall be delighted if you will."

"With all my heart."

*
**

25th September, 1873.

Have spent a charming week at the Vicarage—a lovely country-house, where for the first time I have seen what real English life is.

I have spoken to my English friend of my prospects, and he expresses his wonder that I do not make use of the letters of recommendation that I possess, as they would be sure to secure a good position for me.

"Are not important posts given by examination in this country?" I exclaimed.

But he informs me that such is not the case; that these posts are given, at elections, to the candidates who are bearers of the best testimonials.

The information is most valuable, and I will act upon my friend's advice.

My visit has been as pleasant as it has been useful.

*
**

12th January, 1874.

A vacancy occurred lately in one of the great public schools. I sent in my application, accompanied by my testimonials.

Have just received an official intimation that I am elected head-master of the French school at St. Paul's.

*
**

14th January, 1874.

One piece of good luck never comes alone.

I am again appointed London correspondent to one of the principal Paris papers.

Allons, me voilà sauvé!

[1] Things have changed in England since the dynamite scare.

I am not quite sure that the best qualification for a school-master is to have been a very good boy.

I never had great admiration for very good boys. I always suspected, when they were too good, that there was something wrong.

When I was at school, and my master would go in for the recitation of the litany of all the qualities and virtues he possessed when a boy—how good, how dutiful, how obedient, how industrious he was—I would stare at him, and think to myself: How glad that man must be he is no longer a boy!

"No, my dear little fellows, your master was just like you when he was mamma's little boy. He shirked his work whenever he could; he used to romp and tear his clothes if he had a chance, and was far from being too good for this world; and if he was not all that, well, I am only sorry for him, that's all."

*
**

I believe that the man who thoroughly knows all the resources of the mischievous little army he has to fight and rule is better qualified and prepared for the struggle.

We have in French an old proverb that says: "It's no use trying to teach an old monkey how to make faces."

The best testimonial in favor of a school-master is that the boys should be able to say of him: "It's no use trying this or that with him; he always knows what we are up to."

How is he to know what his pupils are "up to" if he has not himself been "up to" the same tricks and games?

The base of all strategy is the perfect knowledge of all the roads of the country in which you wage war.

To be well up in all the ways and tricks of boys is to be aware of all the moves of the enemy.

*
**

It is an awful moment when, for the first time, you take your seat in front of forty pairs of bright eyes that are fixed upon you, and seem to say:

"Well, what shall it be? Do you think you can keep us in order, or are we going to let you have a lively time of it?"

All depends on this terrible moment. Your life will be one of comfort, and even happiness, or one of utter wretchedness.

Strike the first blow and win, or you will soon learn that if you do not get the better of the lively crew they will surely get the better of you.

*
**

I was prepared for the baptism of fire.

I even had a little theory that had once obtained for me the good graces of a head-master.

This gentleman informed me that the poor fellow I was going to replace had shot himself in despair of being ever able to keep his boys in order, and he asked me what I thought of it.

"Well," I unhesitatingly answered, "I would have shot the boys."

"Right!" he exclaimed; "you are my man."

If, as I strongly suspected from certain early reminiscences, to have been a mischievous boy was a qualification for being a good school-master, I thought I ought to make a splendid one.

The result of my first interview with British boys was that we understood each other perfectly. We were to make a happy family. That was settled in a minute by a few glances at each other.

IV.

THE "GENUS" BOY. — THE ONLY ONE I OBJECT TO. — WHAT BOYS WORK FOR.

Boys lose their charm when they get fifteen or sixteen years of age. The clever ones, no doubt, become more interesting to the teacher, but they no longer belong to the *genus* boy that you love for his very defects as much as for his good qualities.

I call "boys" that delightful, lovable race of young scamps from eleven to fourteen years old. At that age all have redeeming points, and all are lovable. I never objected to any, except perhaps to those who aimed at perfection, especially the ones who were successful in their efforts.

For my part, I like a boy with a redeeming fault or two.

By "boys" I mean little fellows who manage, after a game of football, to get their right arm out of order, that they may be excused writing their exercises for a week or so; who do not work because they have an examination to prepare, but because you offer them an inducement to do so, whether in the shape of rewards, or maybe something less pleasant you may keep in your cupboard.

V.

SCHOOL BOYS I HAVE MET. — PROMISING BRITONS. — SLY-BOOTS. — TOO GOOD FOR THIS WORLD. — "NO, THANKS, WE MAKES IT." — FRENCH DICTIONARIES. — A NAUGHTY BOY. — MOTHERS' PETS. — DIRTY BUT BEAUTIFUL. — JOHN BULLY. — HIGH COLLARS AND BRAINS. — DICTATION AND ITS TRIALS. — NOT TO BE TAKEN IN. — UNLUCKY BOYS. — THE USE OF TWO EARS. — A BOY WITH ONE IDEA. — MASTER WHIRLIGIG. — THE INFLUENCE OF ATHLETICS. — A GOOD SITUATION. — A SHREWD BOY OF BUSINESS. — MASTER ALGERNON CADWALADR SMYTH, AND OTHER TYPICAL SCHOOLBOYS.

Master Johnny Bull is a good little boy who sometimes makes slips in his exercises, but mistakes never.

He occasionally forgets his lesson, but he always "knows" it.

"Do you know your lesson?" you will ask him.

"Yes, sir," he will reply.

"But you can't say it."

"Please, sir, I forget it now."

Memory is his weak point. He has done his best, whatever the result may be. Last night he knew his lesson perfectly; the proof is that he said it to his mother, and that the excellent lady told him he knew it very well. Again this morning, as he was in the train coming to school, he repeated it to himself, and he did not make one mistake. He knows he didn't.

*
**

If he has done but two sentences of his home work, "he is afraid" he has not quite finished his exercise.

"But, my dear boy, you have written but two sentences."

"Is that all?" he will inquire.

"That is all."

"Please, sir, I thought I had done more than that." And he looks at it on all sides, turns it to the right, to the left, upside down; he reads it forwards, he reads it backwards. No use; he can't make it out.

All at once, however, he will remember that he had a bad headache last night, or maybe a bilious attack.

The bilious attack is to the English schoolboy what the *migraine* is to the dear ladies of France: a good maid-of-all-work.

*
**

Sometimes my young hero brings no exercise at all. It has slipped, in the train, from the book in which he had carefully placed it, or there is a crack in his locker, and the paper slipped through. You order excavations to be made, and the exercise has vanished like magic. Johnny wonders.

"Perhaps the mice ate it!" you are wicked enough to suggest.

This makes him smile and blush. He generally collapses before a remark like this.

*
**

But if he has a good excuse, behold him!

"I could not do my exercise last night," said to me one day a young Briton. It was evident from his self-satisfied and confident assurance that he had a good answer ready for my inquiry.

"You couldn't," I said; "why?"

"Please, sir, grandmamma died last night!"

"Oh! did she? Well, well—I hope this won't happen again."

This put me in mind of the boy who, being reproached for his many mistakes in his translation, pleaded:

"Please, sir, it isn't my fault. Papa *will* help me."

An English schoolboy never tells stories—never.

A mother once brought her little son to the head-master of a great public school.

"I trust my son will do honor to the school," she said; "he is a good, industrious, clever, and trustworthy boy. He never told a story in his life."

"Oh! madam, boys never do," replied the head-master.

The lady left, somewhat indignant. Did the remark amount to her statement being disbelieved, or to an affirmation that her boy was no better than other boys?

*
**

Of course every mother is apt to think that her Johnny or Jenny is nature's highest utterance. But for blind, unreasoning adoration, commend me to a fond grandmamma.

The first time I took my child on a visit to my mother in dear old Brittany, grandmamma received compliments enough on the subject of the "lovely petite blonde" to turn her head. But it did not want much turning, I must say. One afternoon, my wife was sitting with Miss Baby on her lap, and grandmamma, after devouring the child with her eyes for a few moments, said to us:

"You are two very sensible parents. Some people are so absurd about their babies! Take Madame T., for instance. She was here this morning, and really, to hear her talk, one would think that child of hers was an angel of beauty—that there never was such another."

"Well, but, grandmamma," said my wife, "you know yourself that you are forever discoursing of the matchless charms of our baby to your friends."

"Ah!" cried the dear old lady, as serious as a judge; "but that's quite different; in our case it's all true."

*
**

If you ever hope to find the British schoolboy at fault, your life will be a series of disappointments. Judge for yourself.

I (once): "Well, Brown, you bring no exercise this morning. How is that?"

PROMISING BRITON: "Please, sir, you said yesterday that we were to do the 17th exercise."

I (inquiringly): "Well?"

P. B. (looking sad): "Please, sir, Jones said to me, last night, that it was the 18th exercise we were to do."

I (surprised): "But, my dear boy, you do not bring me any exercise at all."

P. B. (looking good): "Please, sir, I was afraid to do the wrong one."

Dear, dear child! the thought of doing wrong but once was too much for him! I shall always have it heavy on my conscience to have rewarded this boy's love of what is right by calling upon him to write out each of those exercises five times.

*
**

That thick-necked boy, whom you see there on the front row aiming at looking very good, and whom his schoolfellows are wicked and disrespectful enough to surname "Potted Angel," is sad and sour. His eyes are half open, his tongue seems to fill his mouth, and to speak, or rather to jerk out the words, he has to let it hang out. His mouth moves sideways like that of a ruminant; you would imagine he was masticating a piece of tough steak. He blushes, and never looks at you, except on the sly, with an uncomfortable grin, when your head is turned away. It seems to give him pain to swallow, and you would think he was suffering from some internal complaint.

This, perhaps, can be explained. The conscience lies just over the stomach, if I am to trust boys when they say they put their hands on their conscience. Let this conscience be heavily loaded, and there you have the explanation of the grumbling ailment that disturbs the boy in the lower regions of his anatomy.

To be good is all right, but you must not over-do it. This boy is beyond competition, a standing reproach, an insult to the rest of the class.

You are sorry to hear, on asking him what he intends to be, that he means to be a missionary. His face alone will be worth £500 a year in the profession. Thinking that I have prepared this worthy for missionary work, I feel, when asked what I think of missionaries, like the jam-maker's little boy who is offered jam and declines, pleading:

"No, thanks—we makes it."

I have great respect for missionaries, but I have always strongly objected to boys who make up their minds to be missionaries before they are twelve years old.

*
**

Some good, straightforward boys are wholly destitute of humor. One of them had once to put into French the following sentence of Charles Dickens: "Mr. Squeers had but one eye, and the popular prejudice runs in favor of two." He said he could not put this phrase into French, because he did not know what it meant in English.

"Surely, sir," he said to me, "it is not a prejudice to prefer two eyes to one."

This boy was wonderfully good at facts, and his want of humor did not prevent him from coming out of Cambridge senior classic, after successfully taking his B.A. and M.A. in the University of London.

This young man, I hear, is also going to be a missionary. The news goes far to reconcile me to the noble army of John Bull's colonizing agents, but I doubt whether the heathen will ever get much entertainment out of him.

*
**

Some boys can grasp grammatical facts and succeed in writing a decent piece of French; but, through want of literary perception, they will give you a sentence that will make you feel proud of them until you reach the end, when, bang! the last word will have the effect of a terrible bump on your nose.

A boy of this category had to translate this other sentence of Dickens: [2] "She went back to her own room, and tried to prepare herself for bed. But who could sleep? Sleep!" [3]

His translation ran thus: "Elle se retira dans sa chambre, et fit ses préparatifs pour se coucher. Mais qui aurait pu dormir? *Sommeil!*"

I caught that boy napping one day.

"Vous dormez, mon ami?... *Sommeil*, eh?" I cried.

The remark was enjoyed. There is so much charity in the hearts of boys!

Another boy had to translate a piece of Carlyle's "French Revolution": "'Their heads shall fall within a fortnight,' croaks the people's friend (Marat), clutching his tablets to write—Charlotte Corday has drawn her knife from the sheath; plunges it, with one sure stroke, into the writer's heart."

The end of this powerful sentence ran thus in the translation: "Charlotte Corday a tiré son poignard de la gaine, et d'une main sûre, elle le plonge dans le cœur de *celui qui écrivait.*"

When I remonstrated with the dear fellow, he pulled his dictionary out of his desk, and triumphantly pointed out to me:

"WRITER (substantive), *celui qui écrit*."

And all the time his look seemed to say:

"What do you think of that? You may be a very clever man; but surely you do not mean to say that you know better than a dictionary!"

Oh, the French dictionary, that treacherous friend of boys!

The lazy ones take the first word of the list, sometimes the figurative pronunciation given in the English-French part.

Result: "*I have a key*"—"J'ai un *ki*."

The shrewd ones take the last word, to make believe they went through the whole list.

Result: "*A chest of drawers*"—"Une *poitrine de caleçons*."

The careless ones do not take the right part of speech they want.

Result: "*He felt*"—"Il *feutra*"; "*He left*"—"Il *gaucha*."

With my experience of certain French dictionaries published in England, I do not wonder that English boys often trust in Providence for the choice of words, although I cannot help thinking that as a rule they are most unlucky.

Very few boys have good dictionaries at hand. I know that Smith and Hamilton's dictionary (in two volumes) costs twenty shillings. But what is twenty shillings to be helped all through one's coaching? About the price of a good lawn-tennis racket.

I have seen boys show me, with a radiant air, a French dictionary they had bought for sixpence.

They thought they had made a bargain.

Oh, free trade! Oh, the cheapest market!

Sixpence for that dictionary! That was not very expensive, I own—but it was terribly dear.



When an English boy is about to write out his French exercise, he invariably begins by heading the copy

"FRENCH,"

written with his best hand, on the first line.

This is to avoid any misunderstanding about the language he is going to use.

I have often felt grateful for that title.

Second Class. H. W. Smith

French.

1. L'Europe est une partie du monde. 2. L'Asie est une partie de le monde 3. L'Afrique est un partie de le monde. 4. L'Amérique est un parti de le monde. 5. Mon père est en France. 6. Mon cousin est dans Allemagne. 7. Notre fête est dans Dusseldorf. D. ou est ta poche? Il est dans Paris.

H. W. Smith

**

Children are very great at titles and inscriptions.

Give them a little penny pocket-book, and their keen sense of ownership will make them go straightway and write their name and address on the first page. When this is done, they will entitle the book, and write on the top of each page: "Memorandum Book."

When I was at school, we French boys used to draw, on the back of the cover of our books, a merry-Andrew and a gibbet, with the inscription:

"Aspice Pierrot pendu,
 Quod librum n'a pas rendu.
 Si librum redidisset,
 Pierrot pendu non fuisset."

I came across the following lines on some English boys' books:

"Don't steal this book for fear of shame,
 For here you see the owner's name;
 Or, when you die, the Lord will say:
 'Where is that book you stole away?'"

**

Boys' minds are like a certain place not mentioned in geographies: they are paved with good intentions. Before they begin their work, they choose their best nib (which always takes some time). This done, they carefully write their name and the title of the exercise. FRENCH looks magnificent. They evidently mean to do well. The first sentence is generally right and well written. In the second you perceive signs of flagging; it then gets worse and worse till the end, which is not legible. Judge for yourself, here is a specimen. It collapses with a blot half licked off.

Master H. W. S.'s flourish after his signature is not, as you see, a masterpiece of calligraphy; but it is not intended to be so. It is simply an overflow of relief and happiness at the thought that his exercise is finished.

Translate the flourish by—

"Done!!!"

★
★★

H. W. S. is not particularly lucky with his genders. Fortunately for him, the French language possesses no neuter nouns, so that sometimes he hits on the right gender. For this he asks no praise. Providence alone is to be thanked for it.

Once he had to translate: "His conduct was good." He first put *sa conduite*. After this effort in the right direction, his conscience was satisfied, and he added, *était bon*. Why? Because an adjective is longer in the feminine than in the masculine, and with him and his like the former gender stands very little chance.

★
★★

I remember two very strange boys. They were not typical, I am happy to say.

When the first of them was on, his ears would flap and go on flapping like the gills of a fish, till he had either answered the question or given up trying, when they would lie at rest flat against his head. If I said to him sharply: "Well, my boy, speak up; I can't hear," his ears would start flapping more vigorously than ever. Sometimes he would turn his eyes right over, to see if he could not find the answer written somewhere inside his head. This boy could set the whole of his scalp in motion, bring his hair right down to his eyes, and send it back again without the least difficulty. These performances were simply wonderful. The boys used to watch him with an interest that never flagged, and more than once I was near losing my countenance.

One day this poor lad fell in the playground, and cut his head open. We were all anxious to ascertain what it was he had inside his head that he always wanted to get at. The doctor found nothing remarkable in it.

The other boy was a fearful stammerer. The manner in which he managed to get help for his speech is worth relating. Whenever he had to read a piece of French aloud, he would utter the letter "F" before each French word, and they would positively come out easily. The letter "F" being the most difficult letter for stammerers to pronounce, I always imagined that he thought he would be all right with any sound, if he could only say "F" first.

He was successful.

A boy with whom you find it somewhat difficult to get on is the diffident one who always believes that the question you ask him is a "catch." He is constantly on guard, and surrounds the easiest question with inextricable difficulties. It is his misfortune to know that rules have exceptions, and he never suspects that it would enter your head to ask him for the illustration of a general rule.

He knows, for instance, that nouns ending in *al* form their plural by changing *al* into *aux*; but if you ask him for the plural of *général*, he will hesitate a long while, and eventually answer you, *généraux*.

"Do you mean to say, my boy, that you do not know how to form the plural of nouns in *al*?"

"Yes, sir, but I thought *général* was an exception."

★
★★

I pass over the wit who, being asked for the plural of *égal*, answered, "two gals."

★
★★

A diverting little boy in the class-room is the one who always thinks "he has got it." It matters little to him what the question is, he has not heard the end of it when he lifts his hand to let you know he is ready.

"What is the future of *savoir*?"

"Please, sir, I know: *je savoirai*."

"Sit down, you ignoramus."

And he resumes his seat to sulk until you give him another chance. He wonders how it is you don't like his answers. His manner is generally affable; you see at once in him a mother's pet who is much admired at home, and thinks he is not properly appreciated at school.

Mother's pets are to be recognized at a glance. They are always clean and tidy in face and

person. Unfortunately they often part their hair in the middle.

*
**

Such is not the testimonial that can be given to young H. He spends an hour and a pint of ink over every exercise.

He writes very badly.

To obtain a firm hold of his pen, he grasps the nib with the ends of his five fingers. I sometimes think he must use his two hands at once. He plunges the whole into the inkstand every second or two, and withdraws it dripping. He is smeared with ink all over; he rubs his hands in it, he licks it, he loves it, he sniffs it, he revels in it. He wishes he could drink it, and the ink-stands were wide enough for him to get his fist right into it.

This boy is a most clever little fellow. When you can see his eyes, they are sparkling with mischief and intelligence. A beautiful, dirty face; a lovely boy, though an "unwashed."

*
**

A somewhat objectionable boy, although he is not responsible for his shortcomings, is the one who has been educated at home up to twelve or fourteen years of age.

Before you can garnish his brain, you have to sweep it. You have to replace the French of his nursery governess—who has acquired it on the *Continong*—by a serious knowledge of *avoir* and *être*.

He comes to school with a testimonial from his mother, who is a good French scholar, to the effect that he speaks French fluently.

You ask him for the French of

"It is twelve o'clock,"

and he answers with assurance:

"C'est douze heures."

You ask him next for the French of

"How do you do?"

and he tells you:

"Comment ça va-t-il?"

You call upon him to spell it, and he has no hesitation about it: *"Comment savaty?"*

You then test his knowledge of grammar by asking him the future of *vouloir*, and you immediately obtain: *"Je voudrai."*

You tell him that his French is very shaky, and you decide on putting him with the beginners.

The following day you find a letter awaiting you at school. It is from his indignant mother. She informs you that she fears her little boy will not learn much in the class you have put him in. He ought to be in one of the advanced classes. He has read Voltaire [4] and can speak French.

She knows he can, she heard him at Boulogne, and he got on very well. The natives there had no secrets for him; he could understand all they said.

You feel it to be your duty not to comply with the lady's wishes, and you have made a bitter enemy to yourself and the school.

This boy never takes for granted the truth of the statements you make in the class-room. What you say may be all right; but when he gets home he will ask his mamma if it is all true.

He is fond of arguing, and has no sympathy with his teacher. He tries to find him at fault.

A favorite remark of his is this:

"Please, sir, you said the other day that so-and-so was right. Why do you mark a mistake in my exercise to-day?"

You explain to him why he is wrong, and he goes back to his seat grumbling. He sees he is wrong; but he is not cured. He hopes to be more lucky next time.

When you meet his mother, she asks you what you think of the boy.

"A very nice boy indeed," you say; "only I sometimes wish he had more confidence in me; he is rather fond of arguing."

"Oh!" she exclaims, "I know that. Charley will never accept a statement before he has discussed it and thoroughly investigated it."

*
**

As a set-off for Charley, there is the boy who has a blind confidence in you. All you say is gospel to him, and if you were to tell him that the French word *voisin* is pronounced *kramshaka*, he would unhesitatingly say *kramshaka*.

Nothing astonishes him; he has taken for his motto the *Nil admirari* of Horace. He would see three circumflex accents on the top of a vowel without lifting his eyebrows. He is none of the inquiring and investigating sort.

*
**

Another specimen of the Charley type is the one who has been coached for the public school in a Preparatory School for the Sons of Gentlemen, kept by ladies.

This boy has always been well treated. He is fat, rubicund, and unruly. His linen is irreproachable. The ladies told him he was good-looking, and his hair, which he parts into two *ails de pigeon*, is the subject of his incessant care.

He does not become "a man" until his comrades have bullied him into a good game of Rugby football.

*
**

On the last bench, right in the corner, you can see young Bully. He does not seek after light, he is not an ambitious boy, and the less notice you take of him the better he is pleased. His father says he is a backward boy. Bully is older and taller than the rest of the class. For form's sake you are obliged to request him to bring his work, but you have long ago given up all hope of ever teaching him any thing. He is quiet and unpretending in class, and too sleepy to be up to mischief. He trusts that if he does not disturb your peace you will not disturb his. When a little boy gives you a good answer, it arouses his scorn, and he not uncommonly throws at him a little smile of congratulation. If you were not a good disciplinarian, he would go and give him a pat on the back, but this he dares not do.

When you bid him stand up and answer a question, he begins by leaning on his desk. Then he gently lifts his hinder part, and by slow degrees succeeds in getting up the whole mass. He hopes that by this time you will have passed him and asked another boy to give you the answer. He is not jealous, and will bear no ill-will to the boy who gives you a satisfactory reply.

If you insist on his standing up and giving sign of life, he frowns, loosens his collar, which seems to choke him, looks at the floor, then at the ceiling, then at you. Being unable to utter a sound, he frowns more, to make you believe that he is very dissatisfied with himself.

"I know the answer," he seems to say; "how funny, I can't recollect it just now."

As you cannot waste any more time about him, you pass him; a ray of satisfaction flashes over his face, and he resumes his corner hoping for peace.

The little boys dare not laugh at him, for he is the terror of the playground, where he takes his revenge of the class-room.

His favorite pastime in the playground is to teach little boys how to play marbles. They bring the marbles, he brings his experience. When the bell rings to call the boys to the class-rooms, he has got many marbles, the boys a little experience.

*
**

One of my pet aversions is the young boy who arrays [5] himself in stand-up collars and white merino cravats.

George Eliot, I believe, says somewhere that there never was brain inside a red-haired head. I think she was mistaken. I have known very clever boys with red hair.

But what I am positive about is that there is no brain on the top of boys ornamented with stand-up collars.

Young Bully wears them. He comes to school with his stick, and whenever you want a match to light the gas with he can always supply you, and feels happy he is able for once to oblige

you.

*
**

In some boys I have often deplored the presence of two ears. What you impart through one immediately escapes through the other. Explain to them a rule once a week, they will always enjoy hearing it again. It will always be new to them. Their lives will ever be a series of enchantments and surprises.

You must persevere, and repeat things to them a hundred times, if ninety-nine will not do. Who knows there is not a John Wesley among them?

"I remember," once said this celebrated divine, "hearing my father say to my mother: 'How could you have the patience to tell that blockhead the same thing twenty times over?' 'Why,' said she, 'if I had told him only nineteen times, I should have lost all my labor.'"

*
**

I am not sure that the boy with only one ear is not still more tiresome. He always turns his deaf ear to you, and makes his little infirmity pay. "He is afraid he did not quite hear you, when you set the work yesterday." For my part, I met the difficulty by having desks placed each side of my chair. On my left I had the boys who had good right ears; on my right, those who had good left ones.

I can not say I ever saw many signs of gratitude in boys for this solicitude of mine in their behalf.

*
**

At dictation time the two-eared boy is terrible, and you need all the self-control you have acquired on the English shores to keep your head cool.

Before beginning, you warn him that a mute *e*, or an *s*, placed at the end of a vowel, gives a long sound to that vowel, that *ie* is long in *jolie*, and *i* is short in *joli*; that *ais* is long in *je serais*, and *ai* is short in *je serai*.

Satisfied that he is well prepared, you start with your best voice:

"*Je serais...*"

The boy looks at you. Is he to write *je serais* or *je serai*?

To settle his undecided mind, you repeat:

"*Je serais,*"

and you may lay great emphasis on *ais*, bleating for thirty seconds like a sheep in distress.

He writes something down at last. You go and see the result of your efforts. He has written

"*Je serai.*"

Drat the boy!

Next time you dictate a word ending in *ais*, he won't be caught again.

He leaves a blank or makes a blot.

*
**

You must never take it for granted that you have given this boy all the explanations he requires to get on with his work. You will always find that there is something you have omitted to tell him.

He is not hopelessly stupid, he personifies the *vis inertiae*; he is indifferent, and takes but one step at a time.

He will tell you he did not know that there were notes at the end of his French text-books. When he knows that there are such notes, he will inform you next time that you did not tell him he was to look at them.

He sees things, but at first he does not know what they are for unless they are labelled, and he will ignore the use of a chair if you do not point out the flat part of this piece of furniture, or better still, touch it, saying, "Chair—to sit upon."

The following are bits of conversation you will have with him in the class-room:

"How is it you have no copy to give me?"

"I thought we only had to prepare the piece."

Of course you know what it means when a boy tells you he has "prepared" his work, but has not written it down. So you tell him he is to bring a copy next time. He does, for he is most anxious to do as he is told.

When you ask him to give you the translation of the piece *viva voce*, he tells you:

"Please, sir, you did not tell us we were to learn the piece."

"But, my boy, don't you understand that you are doing a piece of French twice a week in order to learn the language?"

He never thought of that. He had to write out the translation of a piece of French, and he has done it. He did not know he had to draw such bewildering conclusions as you have just mentioned.

He does as he is told, and he marvels you do not consider him a model of a boy.

If he were placed at the door of the reading-room of the British Museum, with orders to inform people that they must take their umbrellas or sticks to the cloak-room, he would carry out the intentions of the librarians with a vengeance.

"Take your stick or your umbrella to the cloak-room," he would say to the first person presenting himself at the door.

"But I have not got either," might reply the visitor.

"That's no business of mine; go and fetch them," he would naturally suggest.

He can grasp but one idea at a time, and this one idea does not lead to another in his mind. There it remains like the buried talent.

*
**

Master Whirligig is a light-headed boy. It requires very little to entertain him. The falling of a book, a cough, a sneeze, an organ in the street, will send him into fits of hilarity behind his pocket-handkerchief, and when the school breaks up for the Midsummer holidays, he will be able to tell you the exact number of flies that passed through the class-room during the term.

He is never still for a moment. Always on the look-out for fresh events, he is the nearest approach to perpetual motion yet discovered.

The cracks in this boy's cranium may be explained physiologically. Matter subjected to constant motion gets heated, as we all know. Now young Whirligig's skull is but scantily furnished with brain matter, and it would be wise of him to keep it still. This he seems to be incapable of doing. He is for ever jerking and shaking it, churning the contents in fact. The churn heated, hot vapors are generated; they expand, the pressure is too great, they must escape—they force an outlet—hence the cracks.—Q.E.D.

*
**

If you want to see the good average English schoolboy in all his glory, make him write out a rule of French grammar, and tell him to illustrate it with an example.

Nine times out of ten his example will illustrate the contrary to the rule.

He has heard over and over again, for instance, that a French past participle, conjugated with the auxiliary *avoir*, sometimes agrees with its direct object and sometimes does not. This he thinks very hard upon him. Funny temper these past participles have! You never know when they will agree. It is not fair, now, is it? By consulting his grammar, he would be enabled to satisfy his master. But he does not do that. He trusts to his luck, and has a shot. After all, his chance is 50 per cent. He generally fails to hit.

Is he not a most unlucky little creature?

Ask this boy to give you the French for "this woman is good," he will answer you: "*Bonne est cette femme*." He has heard that *bon* was one of those few adjectives that have to be placed before the noun, and that is very unfair to him, isn't it?

*
**

If you set an exercise to English boys, to be written out on the spot, they all set off quickly, the question being, as they look at one another:

"Who shall have finished first?"

This I hold to be due to the influence of athletics.

"Please, sir, I've done!" will exclaim the winner triumphantly, as he looks at the rest of the class still busy scratching their paper.

You generally like to know what boys intend to be, in order to direct your attention more specially to the subjects they will require to be grounded in for such or such an examination.

Most boys from twelve to fourteen years old will tell you "they do not know," when you ask them what they will be. Many of them are undecided, many indifferent; some are shy, and afraid you will think it conceited of them to believe they are fit to be one day doctors, officers, barristers, clergymen, etc.

A few answer "I don't know," on the tune of "What is that to you?"

As it is always impolitic to take more interest in people than they do themselves, you do not insist.

Once I asked a nice and clever little boy what he wanted to be.

This little boy's papa was at the time enjoying the well-salaried *far niente* of a chaplaincy attached to an old philanthropical institution that had not had any inmates for many years past.

"Please, sir, I want to be like papa," he answered, ingenuously.

*
**

My young friend T. had no taste for languages, except, perhaps, bad language, if I am to believe certain rumors of a punishment inflicted upon him by the head-master not long ago.

He prepares for the army, but I doubt whether he will succeed in entering it, unless he enlists. I regret it for her Majesty's sake, for he would make a capital soldier. He is a first-rate athlete, resolute, strong, and fearless. He would never aim at becoming a field-marshal, and I hold that his qualities ought to weigh in an examination for the army as much as a little Latin and Greek.

I never heard of great generals being particularly good at Latin, except Julius Cæsar, who wrote his Commentaries on the Gallic Wars in that language, and without a dictionary, they say.

My young friend is the kind of boy who, in the army, would be sure to render great service to his country; for, whether he killed England's enemy or England's enemy killed him, it would eventually be for the good of England.

*
**

Ah! now, who is that square-headed boy, sitting on the second form near the window? He looks dull; he does not join in the games, and seldom speaks to a school-fellow. He comes to school on business, to get as much as he can for his money.

He is not brilliant, but steady-going; he is improving slowly but surely. He goes on his jog-trot way, and always succeeds in being placed among the first twelve boys of the class. He is what is called a "respectable person."

He never smiles, and you would think he had on his shoulders the responsibility of the management of the London and Westminster Bank.

His books are carefully covered in brown paper or American cloth. He writes rough copies on the backs of old exercises, and wipes his pen when he has finished his work. He buys his books second-hand in Holywell Street, [6] and when he has finished with them they have the same market value as when he bought them.

He lends old nibs and half-sheets of paper, and requires the borrower to give him back new nibs and foolscap sheets.

He studies French with all the energy he is capable of, because his father has told him that, with a good knowledge of French, he will command a good salary in the City.

You ask him what he will be, and he answers you:

"In business."

This boy will be a successful man—a lord-mayor, perhaps.

I can not take leave of the class-room without mentioning the boy who is proud of his name.

"What is your name, my boy?"

"Algernon Cadwaladr Smyth."

"Oh! your name is Smith, is it?"

"No, sir; my name is Cadwaladr Smyth."

"You spell your name S-m-i-t-h, don't you?"

"No, sir; S-m-y-t-h," he answers, almost indignantly.

Dear boy! he is as proud of the y of his name as a Howard is of his ancestors—although I am not quite sure the Howards ought to be very proud of their name, seeing that it is but a corruption of *Hog-ward*.

I always thought it was somewhat hard on a boy to have to go through life labeled Cadwaladr; but, as I have remarked elsewhere, in England there is nothing to prevent parents from dubbing their offsprings Bayard, Bertrand du Guesclin—or, for that matter, Nebuchadnezzar.

[2] "The Old Curiosity Shop."

[3] Here I have to make a painful confession. I have actually acceded to a request from my American publishers, men wholly destitute of humor, to supply the reader with a translation of the few French sentences used in this little volume. This monument of my weakness will be found at the end.

[4] Poor little chap!

[5] Being a little bit of a philologist, I assume this verb comes from the common (very common) noun, *'Arry*.

[6] A street in London where Jews sell second-hand books.

VI.

FRENCH AS SHE IS TRADUCED. — MORE GRUMBLING. — "LA CRITIQUE" IS NOT THE CRITIC'S WIFE. — BOSSUET'S PROSE AND HOW IT READS IN ENGLISH. — NOTHING IMPROVES BY TRANSLATION EXCEPT A BISHOP. — A FEW FRENCH "HOWLERS." — VALUABLE HINTS ON TRANSLATING UNSEEN PASSAGES.

English boys have invented a special kind of English language for French translation.

It is not the English they use with their classical and other masters; it is not the English they use at home with their parents, or at school with their comrades; it is a special article kept for the sole benefit of their French masters.

The good *genus* boy will translate *oui, mon père*, by "yes, my father," as if it were possible for him to forget that he calls his papa *father*, and not *my father*, when he addresses him.

He very seldom reads over his translation to ascertain that it reads like English; but when he does, and is not perfectly satisfied with the result, he lays the blame on the French original. After all, it is not his fault if there is no sense in the French, and he brings a certain number of English dictionary words placed one after the other, the whole entitled FRENCH.

Of course he can not call it ENGLISH, and he dares not call it NONSENSE.

He calls it French, and relieves his conscience.

It will take boys long to understand that *la trompette*, *la médecine*, *la marine*, *la statuaire*, are not respectively the wives of *le trompette*, *le médecin*, *le marin*, *le statuaire*.

An honest little boy once translated "*La critique doit être bonne fille*" by "The critic's wife ought to be a good girl."

Poor little fellow! it is most probable that no dictionary within his reach would have explained to him that the expression *bonne fille* meant "good-humored."

*
**

O Bossuet, veil thy face!

The finest piece of French prose in existence is undoubtedly the following sentence, taken from Bossuet's funeral oration on the Great Condé:

"Restait cette redoutable infanterie de l'armée d'Espagne, dont les gros bataillons serrés, semblables à autant de tours, mais à des tours qui sauraient réparer leurs brèches, demeuraient inébranlables au milieu de tout le reste en déroute, et lançaient des feux de toutes parts."

This reads like a chant of Homer, does it not? It reads quite differently in boys' translations, I assure you, when you come to "towers that would be able to mend their breaches."

This confirms you in your belief that nothing improves by translation—except a bishop.

*
**

From my little collection of what is called in the scholastic profession "Howlers," I extract the following, with my apologies to their perpetrators.

*
**

La fille de feu ma bonne et estimée cousine est toujours la bienvenue, "My good and esteemed cousin, the daughter of fire, is always welcome."

*
**

Mon frère a tort et ma sœur a raison, "My brother has some tart and my sister has some raisins."

*
**

Elle partit dans la matinée du lendemain, "She took part in the morning performance of legerdemain."

This is a specimen of German *geist* perpetrated by a candidate to our scholarships, and a young subject of his Venerable Majesty Emperor William.

Honor to whom honor is due.

*
**

When I said that boys do not look at the notes given at the end of their text-books, it was nothing short of a libel, as two cases following will prove.

*
**

Diab!e! c'est qu'il est capricieux, le bonhomme!

A boy looked at a note on this phrase, and found: "*capricieux*, akin to Latin *capra* (a goat)." Next day, he brought his translation, which ran thus:

"The good man is devilishly like a goat."

*
**

The next two "howlers" were indulged in by my boys, as we were reading Jules Sandeau's *Mademoiselle de la Seiglière*.

The Baroness de Vaubert says to the Marquis de la Seiglière: "*Calmez-vous*."

A boy having translated this by "Calm yourself," I observed to him:

"Couldn't you give me something more colloquial?"

Boy, after a moment's reflection:

"Keep your hair on, old man."

★
★★

Je laisse Renaud dans les jardins d'Armida, "I leave this fox in the gardens of Armida," and, between brackets, the following explanatory statement:

("Jerusalem delivered Tasso in the hands of an enchantress named Armida.") [7]

★
★★

Chaque âge a ses plaisirs was translated by a nice little boy, "Every one grows old for his preserves."

(Evidently written after a surfeit of jam.)

★
★★

The vagaries of my young friends are thrown into the shade by some achievements of professional translators which I have come across in America. A French master may occasionally enjoy the drolleries that a magnificent disdain for dictionary trammels and a violent yearning towards the playground will betray his pupil into; but I imagine that a publisher, who pays in hard cash for the faithful translation of a French book, can scarcely be pleased to find that the work has been interlarded with mirth-provoking blunders thrown in gratis.

I extract the two following examples of "French as she is traduced" from the translation of one of my books that the American pirates did me the honor to publish:

Les exploits d'Hercule sont de la Saint Jean auprès de..., "The exploits of Hercules are but of the St. John order compared to..."

Monsieur, ne vous retournez pas, "Sir, do not return yourself."

★
★★

But to return to John Bull, junior.

I pass young worthies who translate "*I have never read any thing by Molière*" by "*Je n'ai pas jamais lit quelque chose par Molière*," on the ground that "it is so in English." This "French" sentence was, by-the-bye, the first essay on Molière I received at the hands of the English boys.

Some little fellows, trusting their sense of sight, have the objectionable habit of writing the translation of a text before looking at it, at all events before seeing it.

Result: "*Il recommandait les vieux souliers*"—"He recommended the old soldiers."

A clever boy, whilst reading a comedy at first sight, translated "EGLANTINE (*baissant les yeux*)" by "EGLANTINE (*kissing his eyes*)."

You naughty boy!

★
★★

I once read the following sound advice given in the preface of a French Translation book:

"HINTS ON TRANSLATING UNSEEN PASSAGES."

- "1. Read the passage carefully through, at least twice."
- "2. Keep as closely as possible to the original in sense, but use English idiom boldly."
- "3. Never write down nonsense."

Now, and whilst I think of it, why *unseen*?

It may be that I do not perceive the niceties of the English language, but this commonly used word, "unseen," never conveyed any meaning to my mind. Would not "unforeseen" be a better word? I would timidly suggest.

If the book in question succeeded in making boys carry out the foregoing suggestions, it would be worth its weight in gold.

As far as my experience goes, the only hint which I have known them follow is the one that tells them to use English idiom boldly.

A drawback to these hints is that they are given in the preface. Now, dear colleagues and *confrères*, which of you has ever known a school-boy read the preface of his book?

[7] I reproduce the note which had "helped" the boy:

["*Renaud dans les jardins d'Armida*," *the enchanted gardens of Armida*
("Jerusalem Delivered," Tasso), *figuratively, in the hands of an enchantress.*]

VII.

ENGLISH BOYS ON FRENCH ETYMOLOGIES. — WHY "SILENCE" IS THE ONLY FRENCH NOUN, ENDING IN "ENCE," THAT IS OF THE MASCULINE GENDER. — A VALUABLE SERVICE RENDERED BY THE AUTHOR TO HIS LAND OF ADOPTION. — LEARNED ETYMOLOGIES. — RETURN TO OLD PHILOLOGICAL METHODS. — REMARKABLE QUESTIONS. — WRITTEN AND ORAL EXAMINATIONS. — A KIND EXAMINER. — HOW LONG WOULD IT TAKE THE MOON TO FALL TO THE EARTH? — HOW MANY YARDS OF CLOTH IT TAKES TO COVER AN ASS. — I EXAMINE IN GERMAN.

French boys, and only of late, are made to go through a course of French philology during their last two years at school; but English school-boys, who are seldom taught to speak French, and who would find it just as difficult to make themselves understood in Paris as they would in Pekin, are made to study the "rudiments" of French philology, that is to say, the origin of words they are unable to put together so as to make French sentences of them.

I might take this opportunity for discussing whether English school-boys should not leave alone all this nonsense, and devote the little spare time they have to learning how to put French words together with a decent pronunciation; but I have promised myself to discuss nothing in this little volume of personal recollections, and I will keep my word.

After all, what Englishmen want to be able to do is to write a letter in French, and to ask for a steak or a mutton-chop in a French restaurant, without having to low or bleat to make the waiter understand that it is beef or mutton they want.

I did not go to England to make reforms; I accept things as I see them, and I generally wait to give my advice until I am asked for it.

So French philology is taught. A hundred exercises, which I have under my eyes, show me the results of the philological teaching of French in England.

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For once—now for once only, let me make a boast.

Small as I am, I have rendered a valuable service to the land of my adoption. Yes, a service to England, nothing short of that.

For over fifteen years, the French examiners in the University of London invariably every year asked the candidates for Matriculation the following question—I had almost said riddle:

"Which is the only French substantive ending in *ence* that is of the masculine gender, and why?"

You may picture to yourself the unhappy candidates, scratching their heads, and going, in their minds, through the forty and some thousand words which make up the French vocabulary.

Those only who were "in the know" could answer that the famous word was *silence*, as it came from the Latin neuter noun *silentium*, the other French nouns ending in *ence* (from Latin feminine nouns in *entia*) being feminine.

"Well," I said one day to the examiner, an eminent *confrère* and friend, "don't you think you make the candidates waste a good deal of their valuable time, and that it would be better to ask them the question (if you must ask it) in a straightforward manner?"

He thought I was right, and for two years more the question was asked again, but in the

following improved manner:

"Explain why *silence* is the only French noun, ending in *ence*, that is of the masculine gender."

This was sensible, and I hoped the examiner would for a long time to come be in smooth water.

The gods willed it otherwise.

One morning he came to me in a great state of excitement.

"I am furious!" he said. "I believe one of the candidates has been laughing at me."

"You don't say so!" I remarked.

"I believe so," he continued, whilst untying a bundle of papers. "Now look at this," he cried, handing me a copy; "have you ever seen such impudence?"

I looked, but could make nothing out of it.

"What's the matter?" I inquired.

"Well, I asked the candidates the question about the gender of *silence*."

"I know, the famous question, eh?"

"Never mind that. See the answer one of them gives me," and he pointed it out to me. It ran thus:

"*Silence* is the only French noun, ending in *ence*, that is masculine, because it is the only thing women can not keep."

Tears of sympathy for the boy trickled down my cheeks; I thought it was lovely.

"Well," I said, when I had recovered, "it serves you right."

"I will *plough* that boy!" he ejaculated.

"No, you won't do that," I said. "How did he do the rest of the paper?"

"Very well, indeed; the impudent scamp is a clever fellow."

"And a wit," I added; "you must not *plough* him."

I never knew the fate of that boy, although I believe I saved him.

But what I do know is that never, never since, has the question found place in the Matriculation papers of the University of London.

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A boy, having to give the etymology of the French word *dimanche*, and explain why "book" and "pound" are expressed by the same French word *livre*, perpetrated the following:

"*Dimanche* is a compound word, formed from *di* (twice), and *manche* (to eat), because you take two meals on that day (Sunday)." [8]

"*Livre* stands for 'book' as well as for 'pound,' because the accounts of 'pounds' are kept in 'books.'"

It was the same boy who, being asked for the meaning of *cordons bleus*, answered "a teetotaler."

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A young Briton, having to derive the French word *tropique*, wrote:

"This word comes from *trop* (too much), and *ique* (from Latin *hic* which means *here*), with the word *heat* understood, that is to say: *Tropique*, it is too hot here."

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Another boy, with a great deal of imagination and power of deduction, having to give the derivation of the French word *cheval*, wrote the following essay:

"*Cheval* comes from the Latin *equus*. The letter *u* was written *v*, which gave

equus = *eqvus* = *quevus*.

"This word became *quevalus*, which finally gave *cheval*."

We might exclaim with d'Aceilly:

"*Cheval* vient d'*equus*, sans doute;
Mais il faut convenir aussi
Qu'à venir de là jusqu'ici,
Il a bien changé sur la route." [9]

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This boy's method is, after all, a return to the old methods. If we consult Ménage's Etymological Dictionary, we see that he easily derives *rat* from *mus*, and *haricot* from *faba*, to take only two instances of the method.

"The Latin *mus*," he says, "became *muratus*, and then *ratus*, which gave us *rat*."

He deals no less successfully with *haricot*, viz:

"The Latin *faba* became by corruption *fabaricus*, which altered into *fabaricotus*, and finally into *aricotus*, which gave us *haricot*."

After this we may appreciate Voltaire's remark that "philologists take no account of vowels, and very little notice of consonants."

Nor do boys.

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If the answers given by candidates at examinations are often remarkable, the questions asked by the examiners are often more wonderful still. Here are a few which have been seriously asked, and—*proh pudor!*—published:

"Define, with reference to passages in the *Lettres Provinciales*, 'grâce suffisante,' 'grâce efficace,' 'grâce actuelle,' '*casuisme*,' 'pouvoir prochain,' 'probabilisme.' Also explain what is meant by 'casuistry.' What can be said in its defence?"

"Give some account of Escobar."

"What are the principal differences between the Latin and the French languages?"

Well might an eminent *confrère* exclaim one day:

"Is not all this printed and published to discourage the study of French?"

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I once heard an examiner ask a dear little fellow, aged eleven, the following poser:

"Give me the derivations of all the words of the French sentence you have just read aloud."

Poor little boy! He took the examiner for a wonderful man.

So he was.

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English examinations consist of so many papers to be taken up; the "viva voce" does not play an important part in England, as it does in France.

A "viva voce" examination very often gives the examiner a better idea of the candidate's abilities and knowledge than a written one, but it has many drawbacks. It favors babblers and the self-assured, and does not enable the timid to show themselves at their best.

The more learned the examiner, the more kind and indulgent is he to the candidates.

Sainte-Claire Deville, the famous French chemist, had to be declined by the authorities at the Sorbonne as an examiner, because he used to answer his questions himself to save the candidates trouble.

"How do you prepare oxygen?" he would ask. "By heating chlorate of potash, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"You place the chlorate of potash in a thin glass flask, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now a small quantity of manganese bi-oxide, mixed with the chlorate of potash, enables you to obtain the oxygen at a much lower temperature, does it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good—now, another question."

And so forth.



On the other hand, there are examiners who make it a rule to bully the candidates, or, worse still, to snub them. They will ask preposterous questions with the mere object of disconcerting them.

"How long would it take the moon to fall to the earth?" I once heard an examiner ask a candidate to the *baccalauréat ès-sciences*.

A facetious examiner once got his due from a young Parisian candidate.

After asking him a few "catches," and obtaining no answers he suddenly said to him:

"Do you know how much cloth would be required to cover an ass?"

"I do not, sir," replied the lad, "but if you are anxious to know, I will ask your tailor."

The audience laughed heartily, and the examiner, seeing that this time the laughter was not on his side, congratulated the boy on his wit, and immediately asked him a few sensible questions, which were answered respectfully, and proved that the candidate had his subjects as ready as his wit.



I was once asked to examine the French and German classes of an important English school.

I wrote to "my lords and gentlemen," saying that my knowledge of German was not such as to enable me to find fault with other people's.

The governors answered that it did not matter, and I was directed to proceed to the Examination.

I got over the difficulty by sharing the work and the fees with an able German, who prepared the questions and corrected the copies.

[8] *Dear boy! he probably was a weekly boarder, and the Sunday fare at home had left sweet recollections in his mind. This beats Swift's etymology of "cucumber," which he once gave at a dinner of the Philological Society: "King Jeremiah, Jeremiah King, Jerkin, Gherkin, Cucumber."*

[9] *"'Cheval' comes from 'equus' no doubt; but it must be confessed that, to come to us in that state, it has sadly altered on the way."*

VIII.

ENGLISH BOYS ON FRENCH COMPOSITION. — "GO AHEAD" IS NOT IN FRENCH "ALLEZ UNE TÊTE." — HOW BOYS SET ABOUT FRENCH COMPOSITION. — A WRITTEN PROOF OF THEIR GUILT. — HOW LARGE ADVERTISEMENTS CAN HELP THEM. — A STUMBLING-BLOCK CLEARED AWAY.

You have achieved a great success when you have succeeded in getting into young boys' heads that French is not English replaced by equivalent words to be found in a dictionary.

This is the way boys generally set about writing a piece of English into French.

They take the first English word, open their dictionary, and put down the French word they have found for it (the wrong one, as a rule, if more than one is given). Then they take the second English word, to which they apply the same process, until they come to a stop, which

they carefully reproduce in the French (many don't). This done, they take their blotting-paper, apply it on the copy, rub it hard for a minute or two, and knock off to enjoy a well-deserved rest.

The amount of blotting-paper used by boys is prodigious. A word is no sooner written down than it is fixed on the paper by a good hearty rubbing down. They are afraid it will evaporate if not properly secured on the paper at once.

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Suppose your young pupils have to put into French "I give you."

They will first write *je*, then *donne*. After the English word "you," they are referred to a note. They look at this note (many don't), and see that they must put the pronoun *vous* before the verb. They do so between the lines, and thus write down the proof of their iniquity:

vous
"je ^ *donne*."

*
**

Although the boys use their eyes to look at things, there are few who use them to see.

Young S. was an exception.

Having to put into French, "No sovereign ever was more worthy," he brought me:

"*Jamais souverain ne fut plus digne*."

I congratulated him on his achievement, and as I was suspicious he had been helped at home I asked him how he came to write this. He then said to me that on his way home he had seen in the station a large advertisement of a tooth-paste maker. The advertisement consisted of a huge woman's head, showing two rows of beautiful teeth, with this inscription:

"*Avec de belles dents jamais femme ne fut laide*."

He had come to the conclusion that this French phrase could help him, and he took it down at the station.

This young Briton has a great future before him.

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A boy having to translate "I have gone out," begins by writing "*j'ai*." That is understood. When afterwards he finds that the verb *sortir* is conjugated with the auxiliary *être*, he changes *j'ai* into *je suis*. Nine times out of ten he trusts his memory, or rather he leaves it to chance, and he keeps *j'ai*.

French books are loaded with facts, but few with explanations.

All the French grammars I know publish the list of the neuter verbs that are conjugated with the auxiliary *être*, but none give boys the reason *why* these verbs are conjugated with *être* and not with *avoir*. Boys learn this list of verbs and forget it, and you know little of boys' nature if you imagine that they will consult their grammar at every turn. Some do, to be sure, but how many?

I do not know of one French grammar that tells students that neuter verbs, which express a state as well as an action, or rather that neuter verbs which express that a *state* is enjoyed as soon as the *action* is over, are conjugated with *être*.

A boy will understand you, and remember what you say, if you tell him:

"As soon as you *have* died, you *are* dead. This is why the verb *mourir*, expressing the *state of being* dead, as soon as the *action* of dying is over, has to be conjugated with *être*."

"As soon as you *have* arrived, you *are* arrived."

"As soon as you *have been* born, you *are* born."

"Therefore all these verbs *arriver, naître, venir, sortir, partir*, etc., are conjugated with *être*."

"By this reasoning, with *courir* (to run) you get an absurdity. 'As soon as you *have* run you *are* run' is an absurdity. Therefore *courir*, expressing only an action, not a state, takes *avoir*."

Yes, boys will understand all that, and nothing gives them more pleasure than having their

minds satisfied with a little explanatory food. I have seen rays of happy satisfaction flashing over scores of young faces as they got hold of these facts.

For the same reason, reflexive verbs are conjugated with *être*, because they also express that a state is enjoyed as soon as the action is over.

"As soon as you *have* washed yourself you *are* washed—if you have done it properly, of course."

Tell the boys so, and they will laugh, and they will understand you, and they will be grateful to you.

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I could give hundreds of instances in which a few explanatory words would settle grammatical facts in boys' minds; but, although I am tempted at almost every page to turn this book into a class—book, I must bear in mind that my aim is not to instruct, and pass on.

IX.

HOW TO BE HAPPY THOUGH A SCHOOL-MASTER. — SUGGESTIONS AND HINTS FOR THE CLASS-ROOM. — BOYS ON HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY. — "MAXIMS" AND "WISE THOUGHTS." — ADVICE TO THOSE ABOUT TO TEACH. — "SIR," AND NOT "MOSSOO." — "FRAULEINS" AND "MADEMOISELLES." — "CHECK" YOUR LOVE FOR BOYS. — NO CREDIT. — WE ARE ALL LIABLE TO MAKE MISTAKES. — I GET AN INSIGHT INTO "STOCKS."

I know masters who spend their time looking at their books with their heads downwards, and who only occasionally lift them up to say to a boisterous class:

"Now then, now then!"

They might as well tell the boys: "Just take a minute's rest, my dears, will you? In a moment I shall be looking at my desk again, then you will be able to go on."

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Face the boys, or you will be nowhere.

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Always be lively. If you once let the boys go to sleep, you will never wake them up again.

Always look the same in face and person. Your moustache curtailed, your whiskers shaved, or the usual shape of your coat altered, will cause a revolution in your class.

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Never show your temper if you have one, and keep the changes of your temperature for the benefit of your wife and family. If you once show your boys that they have enough power to disturb your equilibrium and interfere with your happiness, it is for them a victory, the results of which they will always make you feel.

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If you are annoyed by a boy constantly chatting with his neighbors, see if he has a brother in the class. If he has, place them side by side, and peace will be restored. Brothers will sometimes quarrel in class, but have a quiet chat together, never.

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Never overpraise clever boys, or they will never do another stroke of work. Never snub the dull ones; you don't know that it is not out of modesty that they will not shine over their schoolfellows.

Never ask young English public schoolboys any questions on history that may be suggested to you by the proper names you will come across in the text. Their knowledge of history [10] does not go much beyond the certainty that Shakespeare was not a great Roman warrior, although his connection with Julius Cæsar, Antony, and Coriolanus keep a good many still undecided as to the times he lived in.

Ask them under whose reign Ben Jonson flourished, and you will be presented by them with a general survey of English history from the Norman Conquest to the reign of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria. A good many will also take the opportunity of making a show of their knowledge of literary history (the temptation is irresistible), and add that he was a great man who wrote a good dictionary, and was once kept waiting for a long time in Lord Chesterfield's antechamber, "which he did not like." Boys are generally good at historical anecdotes, a remnant of their early training.

We once had to put into French the following sentence:

"Frederick the Great of Prussia had the portrait of the young Emperor in every room of his Sans-Souci Palace, and being asked the reason why he thus honored the portrait of his greatest enemy, answered that the Emperor was a busy, enterprising young monarch, and that he found it necessary always to have an eye upon him."

I asked the class who this Emperor was that Frederick the Great seemed to fear so much, and I obtained many answers, including Alexander the Great and most well-known imperial rulers down to Napoleon the First; but not one named Joseph II. of Austria.

Another time we were translating a piece of Massillon, taken from his celebrated *Petit Carême*.

When we came to the following passage, in his sermon on *Flattery*: "The Lord," once said the holy King, "shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things," I asked the boys, who, by-the-bye, were referred in the notes to Psalm xii. 3, who was this holy King mentioned by Massillon?

The first answer was "Charles I." The second was "Saint Louis," and I should not probably have received the proper answer if I had not expressed my astonishment at finding that nobody in the class seemed to know who wrote the Psalms.

Even after this remark of mine, many boys remained silent; but at last one timidly suggested "David."

He did not seem to be quite sure.

"This," I thought to myself at the time, "is hardly an encouragement to make children read the Bible twice a day from the time they can spell."

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The knowledge of geography is not more widespread than the knowledge of history among these same boys. So, if you have no time to waste don't ask them where places are.

They know where England is; they know more or less precisely the position of India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Cape of Good Hope, and such other spots of the earth as are marked in red on the maps published in England.

France, Russia, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Turkey, they could after a few hesitations find out on the map of Europe, but as they are not marked in red, their patriotism prevents them from taking any more interest in these countries.

France, however, is rather interesting to them as being a part of the globe in which the French irregular verbs come by nature.

Never expect any thanks for all the trouble you have taken over your pupils.

When boys succeed in their examinations, it is owing to their intelligence and industry; when they fail, it is owing to the bad teaching of their masters. Boys can do no wrong; get this well engraven on your minds.

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When a boy laughs at a mistake made by a schoolfellow, do not believe that he does so out of contempt, and that he knows better. Ask him for the answer immediately, and he will be as quiet as you please.

If you observe him a little, you will see that he never begins to laugh before you have declared the answer of his schoolfellow to be wrong; he would never know himself.

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I always carefully prepared the piece of French that my pupils had to translate, in order to be ready with all the questions suggested to me by the text; but I never prepared composition: I preferred working it in class with them, so as to show them that scores of French sentences properly rendered an English one. I think it is a mistake to impose one

rendering of an English sentence. Anybody can do this—with a key.

Be not solemn in class, nor aim at astonishing the boys with your eloquence.

To look at their staring eyes and gaping mouths, you may perhaps imagine that they are lost in ecstatic admiration. Look again, they are all yawning.

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When you have made the personal acquaintance of the boys who are to make up a class during the term, you can easily assign to them seats that will not perhaps please them, but which will insure peace. A quiet boy placed between two noisy chatterboxes, or a chatterbox placed between two solemn boys, will go a long way towards securing your comfort and happiness. The easiest class-room to manage is the one furnished with separate desks. Then you may easily carry the government on the old principle of *Divide et regna*.

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If you see a boy put his hand before his mouth whilst he is talking, snub him hard for it. Tell him that, when you were a boy and wanted to have a quiet chat with a neighbor, you were not so silly as to thus draw the master's attention and get your little conversation disturbed.

We are none of us infallible, not even the youngest of us, as the late Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, once wittily remarked.

Never be tired of asking for advice; you will become a good school-master only on condition that you will take constant advice from the old stagers.

If, however, you should discover that, in the middle of your lesson, your pupils are all sound asleep, don't go and tell the head-master, and ask him how you should set about keeping them awake. This is beyond his advice.

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The General commanding a French military school had once decided upon having a lecture on Hygiene given to the pupils on Monday afternoons. The day was badly chosen. A French Sunday always means for a French boy a little dissipation in the shape of a good dinner at home or with friends, and on Monday afternoons we generally felt ready for a little doze, if the lecture was in the least prosy.

The lecturer, tired of addressing sleeping audiences, lodged a complaint with the General, and asked that his lecture should henceforth take place on another day of the week.

This could not be arranged, but the General soon decided upon a plan to set matters to rights.

"I will place a *basof* [11] in the room," he said; "he will take down the names of all those who go to sleep, and I shall have them kept in on the following Sunday."

When the lecturer made his next appearance, followed by the *basof*, we thought it would be prudent to listen, and the lesson passed off without accident.

The following Monday, however, the poor lecturer had not proceeded very far, when he discovered that we were all asleep—and that so was the *basof*.

Of course the General inflicted a severe punishment upon us, and also upon the offending Cerberus.

Moral.—I believe that, if a lecturer or a master had gone to complain to an English head-master that all his pupils went to sleep whilst he lectured, the head-master would have answered him:

"My dear sir, if your lecture sends your audience to sleep, it is your fault, not mine, and I don't see how I can help you."

And the sooner the man sent in his resignation, the better for the comfort of all concerned.

If you are a Frenchman, never allow your boys to call you *Mossoo*, *Myshoo*, *Mounzeer*, or any other British adaptation of *Monsieur*. If you do, you may just as well allow them to pat you on the back and call you "Old chappie." They should call you "Sir," otherwise you will lose your footing and fail to be the colleague of the English masters. You will only be the *Mossoo* of the place, something, in the world, like the *Mademoiselle* (from Paris), or the *Fraulein* (from Hanover), of the Establishment for Young Ladies round the corner.

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All the *Frauleins* come from Hanover, as all the *Mademoiselles* are Parisian and Protestants, if I am to believe the column of scholastic advertisements in the English newspapers.

This is wonderful, is it not?

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If you set any value on your reputation and your time, never carry the interest which you naturally take in your pupils the length of inviting them to come to your house to receive extra teaching at your hands, unless it be as a means of improving your revenue.

I once determined to devote all my Saturday evenings to two young fellows whom I was anxious to pass through the Indian Civil Service examination. I thus worked with them five months. Their fathers were men of position. I never received so much as a post-card of thanks from them. If I had charged them a guinea for each visit, I should have received two checks with "many thanks for my valuable services," which would have benefited my banking account and given satisfaction to my professional vanity.

I have since "checked" my love for boys.

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Shun interviews with parents, mothers especially, as you would the plague. Leave this privilege to the head-master, who is paid handsomely for these little drawbacks to his position. If they invite you to dinner, do not fall into the snare, but remember that a previous engagement prevents you from having the pleasure of accepting their kind invitation. Never enter into correspondence with them on the subject of "their dear boy." If, to inflict scruples on your conscience, they should enclose a stamped envelope, give a penny to the first beggar you meet on leaving school. Relieve the conscience, but, whatever you do, don't answer.

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Always pretend you have not seen a breach of discipline when you are not quite sure about the offender, or, when sure, you can not bring a clear charge against him. You have no time for investigations.

Wait for another chance. A boy never rests upon an unpunished offence.

Offence and punishment should be exchanged like shots.

No credit: cash.

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If you correct little boys' copies yourself, you will find that you have undertaken a long and wearisome task that brings no result. When you return these copies, they are received with thanks, folded up, carefully pocketed, and never looked at again. Make the boys reserve a good wide margin for the corrections. Underline all their mistakes, and, under your eyes, make them correct the mistakes themselves.

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However well up you may be in your subjects, you are sure to find yourself occasionally tripping. The derivation of a certain word will escape you for a moment, or the right translation of another will not come to your mind quickly enough. With grown-up and intelligent young fellows in advanced classes, no need to apologise. But with little boys you must remember that you are an oracle. Never for a moment let them doubt your infallibility; call up all the resources of your ingenuity, and find a way out of the difficulty. So a good actor, whose memory fails him for the time, calls upon his imagination to supply its place. And must not any man, who would gain and keep the ear of a mixed audience, be a bit of an actor, let his theatre be the hustings, the church, or the class-room? Has not a master to appear perfectly cross when he is perfectly cool, or perfectly cool when he is perfectly cross? Is not this acting?

It once fell to my unhappy lot to be requested to take an arithmetic class twice a week, during the temporary absence of a mathematical master. In my youth I was a little of a mathematician, but figures I was always bad at. As for English sums, with their bewildering complications of pounds, shillings, pence, and farthings, which that practical people still fondly cling to, it has always been a subject of wonder to me how the English themselves do them. How I piloted those dear boys through Bills of Parcels I don't know; but it is a fact that we got on pretty well till we reached "Stocks." Here my path grew very thorny.

One morning the boys all came with the same sad story. None had been able to do one of the sums I had given them from the book. They had all tried; their brothers had tried; their fathers had tried; not one could do it.

A short look at it convinced me that I should have no more chance of success than all those Britons, young and old, but it would never do to let my pupils know this. They must suppose that those few moments had been sufficient for me to master the sum in. So, assuming my most solemn voice, I said:

"Why, boys, do you mean to tell me you can not do such a simple sum as this?"

"No, we can't, sir," was the general cry.

"Why, Robinson, not even you?" I said to the top boy. "I always considered you a sharp lad. Jones, you cannot? Nor Brown? Well, well; it's too bad."

And, putting on a look of pitying contempt—which must have been quite a success, to judge by the dejection written on the faces before me—I proceeded to give them a little lecture on their arithmetical shortcomings. I felt saved. It was near the time for dismissing the class.

"Boys," said I, to finish up, "I must have been sadly mistaken in you; the best thing we can do is to go back to addition and subtraction to-morrow."

Without being quite so hard as that upon them, I set them an easy task for the next lesson; the bell rang, and the boys dispersed.

I immediately went to the head mathematical master, and had the difficulty explained away in a few seconds.

How simple things are when they are explained, to be sure!

Armed with a new insight into Stocks, I was ready for my young friends the following Friday. After the ordinary work had been got through:

"Now," I said, "have you had another try at that sum, any of you?"

"Yes, sir; but we can't do it," was the reply.

"Well," I said, in a relenting tone, as I went to the blackboard, "I suppose we had better do it together."

I made the boys confess it was too stupid of them to have proved unequal to this *simple* sum; and thus they regained my good graces.

Later in the day I received the glad tidings that the master I replaced was better (goodness knows if I had prayed for the return of his health!). He was to have his boys next time.

Thus was I enabled to retire from the field with flying colors.

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If you do not love boys, never be a school-master. If you love boys and wish to become a school-master, see that you are a good disciplinarian, or take *Punch's* advice to those about to marry:

"Don't."

[10] *I mean "modern history," for although public school-boys know little or nothing of Marlborough and Wellington, they could write volumes about Pericles, Scipio, and Hannibal. Ask them something about the Reform Bill, the Repeal of the Corn Laws, or the causes which led to American Independence, and you will have little essays worth inserting in a comic paper.*

[11] Abbreviation of "bas-officier" (non-commissioned officer).

I am afraid I often put the patriotism of English boys to a severe test.

I generally liked to place in their hands such books as would relate to them the glorious past of France, and teach them to respect her. Let those who do not love their country throw the first stone at me.

Bossuet's "Funeral Orations," Voltaire's "Siècle de Louis XIV.," D'Aubigné's "History of Bayard," Bonnechose's "Lazare Hoche," were among my favorite text-books.

I need not say that I always avoided recommending historical books which, like Bonnechose's "Bertrand du Guesclin," for instance, referred to struggles between France and England. For obvious reasons, I have always preferred reading the accounts of the battles of Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt in French histories to reading them in English ones; [12] and I imagined that Bertrand du Guesclin would not inspire in my pupils the same admiration as he did in us French boys.



But what fiery patriots these British lads are! Why, they would like to monopolize all the victories mentioned in history.

Bossuet's panegyric of Louis XIV. drove them frantic, half mad. Dear little fellows! they were wriggling with pain on their seats as we were reading: "This king, the terror of his enemies, who holds the destinies of Europe in the hollow of his hand and strikes with awe the whole astonished world."

"The whole world struck with awe!" that could not be. Surely Bossuet ought to have said "with the exception of England"—a sad omission on his part.

"Who is it Bossuet is speaking of?" once remarked a good little patriot, on hearing this sentence.

"Louis XIV."

"Louis XIV.?"

"Yes; never heard of him?"

I don't think he had.

Bayard they all liked. His personal deeds of valor appealed to their young imaginations. His athletic powers especially stirred their hearts with admiration.

Besides, his exploits took place such a long time ago that they felt ready to be lenient towards him.



We once came across the name of Louis VI. of France in some French text, and I was unfortunate enough to mention in class that, at the battle of Brenneville, an English soldier came up to the French king, and called upon him to surrender, when Louis VI. remarked: "Don't you know that, at chess, the king cannot be taken prisoner?" and immediately struck the English soldier dead on the spot.

The boys seemed displeased. They looked at one another; it was evident that they thought there was something wrong. The dose was too strong for them to swallow.

I inquired of a little lad, who appeared particularly distressed, what was the matter.

"Please, sir," he said, "did not the English soldier try to kill the French king?"

"Well, I suppose he did," I replied; "but King Louis VI. was very strong, you know."

"He must have been!" he remarked, no doubt feeling more comfortable after my explanation.



This historical anecdote of an Englishman allowing himself to be felled to the ground by a Frenchman puts me in mind of a little conversation I heard in my school-days.

Two young boys, one French, the other English, were talking athletics in the playground, and the English boy asked his young friend to explain to him the principles of French

wrestling.

The little French lad proceeded, in a vivacious manner, to describe the successive moves of the sport.

He used the first person singular to make his description more forcible.

"First," he said, "I would get a good grasp of your waist with my right arm, whilst I would collar you with my left one; then, don't you see, I would twist my right leg round one of yours; then——"

"Ah! but wait a minute," exclaimed the English boy, with a smile. "What should I be doing all this time? Looking at you, I suppose?"

It was at the meetings of our French Debating Society that free play was given to youthful patriotism. Good heavens! what a *tabula rasa* of the map of the world! What fresh jewels added to the British crown! I don't think there is a single little corner of the globe worth mentioning that these boys did not lay their hands on. With what a crushing majority the "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform" policy was defeated! Was it not an insult to this glorious country to suggest that a reform was needed?

"The Liberals," exclaimed a young member, with a movement of Homeric indignation, "may be appreciated in Russia, but they are not Englishmen."



French *collégiens* are red radicals, socialists, anarchists, revolutionists—until they leave school. As I have said elsewhere, leading the lives of prisoners, they dream wild dreams of liberty, they gasp for freedom.

Young Britons, enjoying liberty from tender years, are perfectly satisfied with their lot, and are mostly Conservatives. They identify Conservatism with patriotism; and if the Franchise were extended to them, the Liberal Party would have seen its best days.

The new political school inaugurated by Lord Randolph Churchill is greatly in favor with English boys; we had many Tory Democrats among us.

"Imperium et Libertas" are two words which sound pleasantly in young English ears: the possession of a mighty Empire, and the enjoyment of that "thrice sweet and gracious goddess," Liberty.



I once asked a little English lad why his compatriots ate roast goose on the 29th of September, the anniversary of the defeat of the Spanish Armada.

"Because," he answered proudly, "the King of Spain was such a goose as to come and attack our navy!"

A colleague of mine asked the same question in a different manner, and obtained an equally wonderful answer.

"What is it the English eat on the 29th of September to commemorate the defeat of the Spanish Armada?" he asked.

"Roast duck, sir, because it was Drake who beat the Spanish!"

[12] *I have always been doubtful whether these battles are properly related in histories published in England.*

XI.

CRICKET. — I HAVE AN UNSUCCESSFUL TRY AT IT. — BOYS' OPINION OF MY ATHLETIC QUALITIES. — FRENCH AND ENGLISH ATHLETES. — FEATS OF SKILL AND STRENGTH VERSUS FEATS OF ENDURANCE AND BRUTE FORCE. — A CASE OF EVICTION BY FORCE OF ARMS.

I never tried my hand at cricket but once, and did not get on very well.

I was entrusted with the bat. It was a heavy responsibility. When I saw the ball come I hit hard at it, but missed it. The nasty thing struck me a woful blow on the jaw.

I did not see much in the game, and I withdrew.

Yet I confess that, as I began to understand the rules of cricket, I also began to conceive a certain amount of admiration for the game—at a respectful distance.

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I always suspected the boys did not entertain any great opinion of my athletic powers. The following anecdote, related to me by some ladies, friends of mine, set my mind at rest on the subject.

These ladies, it appears, were traveling one day on the London District line. In the same compartment happened to be half-a-dozen boys, who were going to our annual school sports. The boys soon began to discuss the respective merits of the favorite runners, as well as their chances, and I am not quite sure that a little betting was not indulged in; but this the ladies did not tell me, and you must never run the risk of bringing unfounded charges against boys.

Presently a little fellow suggested that much fun would be added to the sport by the introduction of a master's race in the programme, and naturally this led the conversation to the athletic merits of the masters.

Said one of the merry company:

"What do you think of the French master?"

"Not much," said the chorus.

"Well, he is powerfully built," intimated one with a knowing look, who was, perhaps, bringing some personal recollection to bear on the subject.

"Yes," said another; "but he is too fat; he has no wind. He would be nowhere."

"What would you take him at?" asked the one with a knowing look.

"Sixty to one," was the reply.

Some discussion took place, and I "closed" at fifty to one.

Thus was my case settled.

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As to the matter of athletics, to which English boys are such devotees, I cannot help thinking that they are overdone, made a hobby of, and, like most hobbies in England, ridden to excess. No doubt it is a fine thing for a boy to have plenty of outdoor amusements; it is good for him to be an adept at running, leaping, climbing, swimming; but what in the world does he learn at football, the great winter game of the English schoolboy? Why do the English so neglect pastimes that would develop dexterity of hand and limb, and devote themselves to a game which seems to me to teach nothing except respect of brute force?

"Oh! but it cultivates their powers of endurance," says somebody.

That is true, I believe; although, from what I have seen of the two, I never could discover that an Englishman was more patient under the toothache than a Frenchman.

Now, to get bruised ribs and dislocated shoulders in practicing flights out of second and third storey windows I should understand; an accomplishment of that kind might be useful in case of fire; but to what end does all the bruising of football tend?

The game of football itself seems to be the end, and "not a means to an end," as, I believe, Mr. Matthew Arnold has remarked.

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Yet, behold John Bull, junior, on the football ground! The hero of a bad cause, but for all that a hero; a lusty little fellow, fearless, hardy, strong-knit, iron-muscled, and mule-headed, who, rather than let go a ball that he holds firmly in his arms, will perform feats of valor; who, simply to pass this ball between two goals, will grovel in the dust, reckless of lacerated shoulders, a broken rib or jaw-bone, and will die on a bed of suffering with a smile upon his lips if he can only hear, before closing his eyes, that his side has won the game.

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Speaking from my experience, I should say that at gymnastic exercises, and all pastimes requiring a little skill, French boys are more than the equals of John Bull, junior. They are better at leaping, climbing, and wrestling. As for swimming, nine out of ten French boys are good swimmers. They do not want to emulate Captain Webb's feats when they grow up, because the object or beauty of such feats as his has never been revealed to them.

But that is the Englishman all through.

Can he swim well? Then he must straightway swim across the English Channel; he must outswim his fellow-creatures; he must be the champion of the world, and have the betting in his favor, until he turns his gift into a hobby, sets off on it, and, to the entertainment of a few Yankee excursionists, ends by being drowned in the Niagara Falls.

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As for the *savate*, the *canne*, fencing, which all bring the wits into play as well as the muscles, they, even the last-named, are very little known or practiced in England. In these most young Frenchmen are well up, and as for gymnastic exercises they are more practiced in France than in England, although the English boy fondly imagines he is at the top of the ladder in all matters athletic.

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The craze for athletics has inculcated in English boys the admiration for physical strength. This they like to find in their masters, as well as firmness of mind.

It is not necessary that masters should use the former. Not by any means; but there it is, and they might use it.

There is nothing to inspire people with peaceful dispositions like the sight of a good display of war material.

An ex-colleague of mine became very popular by the following occurrence, the tale of which spread through the school like wildfire.

This gentleman used to teach in a little class-room that led to the playground. One day a big boy of seventeen opened the door from the building, coolly crossed the room, and was about to open the door opposite to let himself out, when my friend caught hold of him by the collar, lifted him off the ground, and, to the stupefaction of the boys, carried him back through the room, as he would have a dog by the skin of his neck, and quietly dropped him outside the door he had entered by. Not a word was uttered, not an *Oh!* not an *Ah!* The performance, if I remember rightly, terminated somewhat comically. The boy had on a paper-collar, which remained as a trophy in the master's hands.

It was, as you see, a case of eviction *vi et armis*, by the force of arms.

XII.

OLD PUPILS. — ACQUAINTANCES RENEWED. — LIVELY RECOLLECTIONS REVIVED. — IT IS EASIER TO TEACH FRENCH THAN TO LEARN IT. — TESTIMONIAL REFUSED TO A FRENCH MASTER. — "HOW DE DO?" — "THAT'S WHAT-D'YE-CALL-HIM, THE FRENCH MASTER."

I like meeting old pupils, especially those who, I am vain enough to think, owe to me a little part of their success in life.

Others have greatly improved since they left school. I used to consider them hopelessly stupid, and now I see them able to speak on general topics with a great amount of common sense. Though they were not fit for school, they are fit for the world. They have good manners and are gentlemen.

Some you cannot recognize with their "chimney-pots"; some will take no notice of you.

Some will come and shake hands with you, and make a tardy acknowledgment of the debt they owe you; some will express their regret that they do not owe you more.

Some will approach you diffidently, and with a grin:

"How do you do, sir? Don't you know me? I am So-and-So."

"To be sure I do."

"Don't you remember I once threw a paper ball in the room, and it fell on your desk by accident?"

"To be sure. And don't you remember what you got for it?"

"Indeed I do. But that was an accident, you know, sir."

"I dare say it was. And how are you getting on?"

"Pretty well. I am in a bank."

"Adding pounds, shillings, and pence?"

"Yes—rather slow sport."

"Slow, yes, when the pounds, shillings, and pence don't belong to you."

"You are right, sir."

"Well, you might, perhaps, have done better for yourself; you were an able boy."

"I don't know about that, but I often regret I did not avail myself of the advantages that were offered to me."

A repentant boy is always a sad sight, and one to be shunned. You comfort him, wish him success, and shake hands.



The interest you have taken in boys at school is put to a severe test when you receive a letter like the following:

"DEAR SIR:

"I have decided on doing a little teaching while my father is trying to obtain a situation for me. I know the interest you have always taken in me and my welfare, and I write to ask if you will kindly give me a testimonial as to my ability to teach French. I am aware that I always was, and am still, a very poor French scholar, so that I can ask for a testimonial from you only as a great personal favor; but I hope you will not refuse me."

After thanking me for past, present, and future kindnesses, he subscribes himself "My obedient and grateful pupil."

This boy, having heard me one day say in class that it was easier to be examiner than to be examined, had probably come to the conclusion that it was also easier to teach French than to learn it.

A testimonial from me could have but very little value; still, the poor boy had to add to his experiences that it was easier to ask for one than to obtain it.

Some old pupils approach you with a patronizing "How de do?"

When asked by a friend who it was they had spoken to, they replied:

"Oh! that's What-d'ye-call-him, the French master—a rather nice fellow, you know."

This was an excuse for condescending to speak to him.

They were under him for ten years only, and they could hardly be expected to remember his name.

XIII.

DEBATING SOCIETIES. — A DISCUSSION ON THE PERNICIOUS USE OF TOBACCO. — SCHOOL MAGAZINES IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND. — A BUSINESS-LIKE LITTLE BRITON. — AN IMPORTANT RESOLUTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. — I PERFORM AN ENGLISHMAN'S DUTY.

Like their seniors in Great Britain, English boys have a little weakness for airing their virtuous sentiments in public, and the school debating societies offer them ample opportunity of giving them full play.

I was once present at a debate on "The Use of Tobacco." Forty young fellows from seventeen to nineteen years of age took part in it. I never was so edified in my life. The dear boys beat Alphonse Karr in their diatribes against the use of tobacco.

"Of course," remarked one member, "it is somewhat pretentious of me to speak of tobacco, as, I am happy to say, I have no experience of it. But I have read a great deal on the subject, and all our scientific men are unanimous in condemning the use of this baneful plant."

"The Use of Tobacco" was condemned by a show of hands, *nem. con.*

It would be wicked to suppose that any member had a little book of "Persian Rice" paper, and half an ounce of "Straight Cut" in his pocket, wouldn't it?

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Our school magazine, edited by the boys, is a well-conducted and interesting record of school events. I can never look at it, printed as it is on beautiful paper, without going back to my school-days in France. We had a magazine of our own, too, but we had to write out two copies of each issue ourselves, and keep them locked in our desks. If we were caught reading them they were confiscated, and we were punished. In English public schools the masters subscribe, and not uncommonly write, for the magazine. The result is that, in England, the periodical is made up of wholesome literary essays, poetry, school news and anecdotes, reports of athletic and other meetings, etc., whereas, in France, it mainly consists of satires against the college and caricatures of the masters.

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In a small private preparatory school where I attended for a short time, the little boys (fourteen in number) one day resolved to start a magazine. I was asked to preside at the meeting. Of course a printed paper was out of the question, and it was decided at the meeting that each of the boys would write it out in turn. Presently a true-born little Briton proposed that an annual dinner, in connection with the paper, should take place. As it was doubtful whether the magazine would enjoy life very long, an amendment, moved by another business-like member, was seized by the forelock, to the effect that the annual dinner should take place at once, and was passed unanimously. The discussion of the *menu* was then entered into, strong preference being manifested for tarts and cream and doughnuts. I most solemnly signed the minute of the previous meeting, and retired with the feeling that I had performed the work of a good British citizen.

XIV.

HOME, SWEET HOME! — BOYS' OPINION OF THE SEASIDE. — FRENCH AND ENGLISH BEACHES. — WHO IS HE AT HOME? WHAT WAS HIS GRANDFATHER? — REMARKS ON SWAGGERING. — "I THOUGHT HE WAS A GENTLEMAN."

I should like to echo the sentiments of many schoolboys on the subject of the place chosen by their parents for their Midsummer holidays.

As a rule, parents think themselves in duty-bound to take their boys to the seaside for these holidays.

In the case of people occupying "desirable" residences in London, this is sensible enough.

But boys who live in the country generally regret to hear that they will not be allowed to spend most of the holiday-time at home, in the midst of all their own belongings. They would prefer building houses for their rabbits, enjoying the favorite walks of their childhood; rowing on the neighboring river with their friends, even if they have to put up, in the evening, with the inconvenience of having to hear their sisters play the piano—a kind of inconvenience to which we are all subject nowadays.

But no; they are packed off to lodgings at the seaside; and they think that the sight of the sea and a few fishing-boats do not make up for rickety chairs, springless sofas, empty rooms, cheerless walls, beds stuffed with pebbles from the beach, and the loss of all home comforts and associations.

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If, as is the case in France, these boys were allowed to mix with those they meet on the

beach, and get up parties with them, life might be made supportable; but, obliged as they are to keep to themselves, or to the company of their brothers and sisters (some have none), they think it was not necessary to come so far in search of boredom.

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French and English beaches illustrate best to my mind the way in which the two nations take their pleasures.

The French seem to set out for their holiday with a thorough determination to enjoy themselves. When they go to the seaside they go there on pleasure bound.

On French beaches every body makes acquaintance; the children play together under the eyes of happy papas and mammas, the grown-up ones go out in large parties bathing, boating, and fishing; and in the evening all meet at the Casino, where there are ball-rooms, concert-rooms, reading and smoking rooms, etc. No doubt many of the people you mix with there are not such as you would wish to invite to your house on a visit, but, the season over, these friends of a day are forgotten, and there remains the benefit to health and spirits from a thorough merry time.

In the English seaside resort, every bather looks askance at his fellow.

"Who is he at home?" or "What was his grandfather?" are questions that he must get satisfactorily answered before he associates with him; and rather than run the risk of frequenting the company of persons of inferior blood he is often bored to death with the monotony of the life, and is glad when it is time to take the children back to school or his own occupations call him away from the sea.

Dear British parents, if you have a garden and fields near your house, and you would like to make your boys happy, call them home for the holidays.

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Apart from the aristocracy, it has always been a subject of wonder to me that caste should be so strong among the middle classes, in a country like England, who owes her greatness to her commercial and adventurous spirit.

In France, what is required of a *gentleman* is high education and refined manners. A peasant's son possessing these is received in any society.

In England, boys begin swaggering about their social position as soon as they leave the nursery, and if you would have some fun, you should follow groups of public school-boys in the playground or on their way home.

Of course, in public schools, the occupation of parents cannot be an objection to their sons' admission, and in your class-room you may have dukes' and saloon-keepers' sons sitting on the same form. These are treated on an equal footing; although I believe the head-master of a working public school would prefer the hangman's son, if a clever lad, to the son of a duke, if he were a fool.

Yes, those groups will afford you a great deal of amusement.

Here are the sons of professional men, of officers, clergymen, barristers. See them pointing out other boys passing: "Sons of merchants, don't you know!"

These are not without their revenge, as they look at a group close by: "Sons of clerks, you know!"

But you should see the contemptuous glance of the latter as they pass the sons of shopkeepers: "Tradespeople's sons, I believe!"

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Here is a little sample conversation I caught as I passed two boys watching a game of cricket in the playground.

"Clever chap, So-and-So!" said one.

"And a nice fellow too, isn't he?" said the other.

"By-the-bye, did you know his father was a chemist?"

"A chemist! No!" exclaimed the dear boy in a subdued tone, as if the news had taken his breath away. "A chemist! you don't mean to say so. What mistakes we are liable to make, to be sure! I always thought he was a gentleman."

XV.

HE CAN NOT SPEAK FRENCH, BUT HE CAN READ IT, YOU KNOW. — HE HAS A TRY AT IT IN PARIS. — NASAL SOUNDS AND ACCENTED SYLLABLES. — HOW I REDUCED ENGLISH WORDS TO SINGLE SYLLABLES, AND WAS SUCCESSFUL IN THE OBJECT I HAD IN VIEW. — A REMARK ON THE CONNECTION OF WORDS.

When you ask an Englishman whether he can speak French, he generally answers:

"I can read it, you know."

"Aloud!" you inquire, with a significant smile.

"Well," he says, "I have never had much practice in reading French aloud. I mean to say that I can understand what I read. Of course, now and then I come across a word that I am not quite sure about, but I can get on, you know."

"I suppose you manage to make yourself understood in France."

"Oh! very little French is required for that; I always go to the English hotels."

He always does so on the Continent, because these hotels are the only ones that can provide him with English comfort.

When he starts for Paris he gets on capitally till he reaches Calais. There he assumes his insular stiffness, which we Continental people take for arrogance, but is, in reality, only dignified timidity.

Arrived at the Gare du Nord, he takes a cab and goes to one of the hotels in the Rue Saint Honoré or the Rue de Rivoli.

The first time he reached one of these establishments, he tripped on getting out of his cab, and fell on the pavement. The porter helped him up and asked him:

"Avez-vous du mal, monsieur?"

He thought the porter took him for a Frenchman, and he prepared to answer in French. Believing he was asked if "he had two trunks," he answers:

"No, only a portmanteau."

After this first success, he thought he would air his French.

"Garçon!" he calls; *"j'ai faim."*

He pronounces this quite perfectly, so perfectly that the waiter, understanding that he is married, informs him that he can have apartments ready for Madame.

"He is obstinate and will have another shot:

"Je suis fameux, garçon!"

The waiter bows respectfully.

This won't do, dear fellow; try again.

"Je suis femme!" he yells.

This staggers the waiter.

It is time to inquire of him if he speaks English.

"Can you speak English?"

"Oh yes, sir."

Our traveler is all right again, but he thinks that those confounded French people have a queer manner of pronouncing their own language.



With the exception of our nasal sounds, which I know are stumbling-blocks to Englishmen—who will always insist on calling our great music composer and pianist Saint-Saëns, "Sang Songs"—I never could understand that the difficulty of our pronunciation was insuperable. Our vowels are bold, well-marked, always sounded the same, and, except *u*, like the English

vowels, or so nearly like them that they can not prevent an Englishman from understanding French and speaking it.

The greatest mistake he makes is in not bearing in mind that the accent should always be laid on the last syllable, or on the last but one if the word ends in *e* mute. How much easier this is to remember than the place of the English accented syllable, which varies constantly! In *admirable*, you have it on the first; in *admire*, on the second; in *admiration*, on the third. On the contrary, no difficulty about the pronunciation of the three French words, *admirable*, *admirer*, and *admiration*; the tonic accent falls on the last sound syllable in every case.

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The less educated a man is the more stress he lays on the accented syllables; and you find the lower classes of a country lay such emphasis on these syllables that they almost pronounce nothing else. Being unable to make myself understood when pronouncing whole English words, I have often tried to use only the accented syllables when speaking to the lower class people of England; in every attempt I have been successful.

I obtained a basket of strawberries in Covent Garden Market by asking for a "*bask of strawbs*."

A lower class Yankee will understand few Frenchmen who speak to him of *America*; but he will understand them if they speak to him of *Merk*.

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The greatest defect in an Englishman's pronunciation of French is generally in the wrong connection of words between which there is no pause.

The final consonant of a word, followed by another beginning with a vowel or *h* mute, should be pronounced as if it belonged to the latter word. An Englishman sounds *ses amis* as if it was *seize amis*. He should say: "se samis."

"Mon ami est à Paris" = "Mo nami è ta Paris."

Perhaps the following remark on the separation of syllables may fix the rule:

The English say: *mag-nan-im-ity*.

The French say: ma-gna-ni-mi-té.

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You see, dear reader, how difficult it is to refrain from talking "shop," when one has been a school-master.

XVI.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS AND EXHIBITIONS. — GRATEFUL PARENTS. — INQUIRING MOTHERS. — A DEAR LITTLE CANDIDATE. — LADIES' TESTIMONIALS. — A SCIENCE MASTER WELL RECOMMENDED.

It seems strange that in a democratic country, overburdened with school-rates, free education should be offered in the public schools to the children of the well-to-do and even wealthy people. To give opportunities to those who have clever children and cannot afford to pay for their education, such was the spirit which dictated the foundation of scholarships and exhibitions in the public schools, which schools are under the supervision of the Charity Commissioners.

The Charity Commissioners! The organizers of that well-ordered British charity which begins at home!

But all this again does not concern me. If it did, I should say to gentlemen enjoying revenues of £700, £800, and £1,000 a year: "My dear sirs, you can afford to pay school fees for your children; please to leave these scholarships to your less fortunate countrymen."

My diary contains a few recollections about foundation scholars and their parents which suggested the foregoing remarks to me. Pardon me for having given them a place here.

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I have always noticed that the parents of foundation scholars are much more troublesome and exacting than those who pay their twenty or thirty pounds a year to the school for their sons' tuition fees.

The school is their property, the masters their servants, and when complaints are lodged with the authorities you may be sure they come from them.

They imagine, for instance, that the school ought to provide the boys with books, and think it very hard that they should be called upon to pay for them. When their sons are ordered to get a new book, they generally take a fortnight to obtain it.

"Where is your book?" you say to a scholar you see looking at his neighbor's.

"Please, sir, it has not come yet; I have ordered it at the stores."

Two weeks later the book makes its appearance.

When the boys raise subscriptions for their sports, which ought to be supported especially by those who owe a debt of gratitude to the school, or for a testimonial got up in favor of a retiring master, or in memory of a celebrated old pupil, the few recalcitrants are invariably to be found among the free scholars.

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Our boys one day decided on founding a little literary society. As a few periodicals were to be bought and other little expenses incurred, their committee passed a resolution that an annual subscription of five shillings should be demanded of the members.

A father immediately wrote to the young president of the new society, asking if it was compulsory for his boy to join the society, as he did not see the force of paying five shillings for what, he thought, his boy was entitled to enjoy for nothing. The *pater* received his due by return of post. The president of the society answered:

"DEAR SIR:

"Your son is not at all compelled to join our society. The subscription of five shillings was decided upon simply to keep our meetings select."

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The Englishman has a supreme contempt for what is cheap. It is in his nature. He cannot understand that there is any value in what he has not to pay for.

I cannot forget the time when a young lunatic hanged himself at Christ's Hospital, and the plethora of letters that were sent to the papers by parents who seemed to be anxious to seize the opportunity of trying to bring discredit on that splendidly conducted school, one of the most interesting philanthropic institutions in England.

A father, sheltering himself behind a pseudonym, went the length of writing to the *Daily News* to say that he had had three sons educated at Christ's Hospital, but that he thanked God he had not any more to send there.

The Governors of Christ's Hospital spend £60 a year upon each blue-coat boy. The three sons of this "indignant" father therefore cost the Hospital something like £2,000.

What respect this man would have felt for the school if the money had been drawn out of his own pocket in the shape of capitation fees!

*
**

The following conversation once took place between a lady and the head master of a great public school:

"I have a little boy eleven years old," said the lady, "whom my husband is anxious to have educated here. He is a very clever little fellow. We have heard that, on leaving the school to go to one of the two great universities, some boys received exhibitions varying in value from £80 to £100 a year for four years. Do you think, sir, that our son would get one, for the probability of his obtaining such an exhibition would be a great inducement to us to trust the boy to your care?"

"Well," replied the head-master, with great command over his countenance, "I am afraid I cannot commit myself to any such promise."

The lady retired. Her promising son was probably sent to a more accommodating school.

*
**

The same head-master once received the visit of a man who asked him point-blank if the scholarship examinations were conducted honestly, or, in other words, if the scholarships were given according to merit.

From the answer he received he deemed it expedient to beat a speedy retreat.

*
**

When a school has to offer, say, six scholarships to the public, and there are a hundred candidates applying for them, you may easily imagine that it is difficult to persuade the parents of the ninety-four boys who fail that the scholarships are given according to merit.

In distributing six scholarships among a hundred candidates you make six ungrateful fathers and ninety-four discontented ones.

*
**

Whilst our school was being rebuilt in another part of the metropolis, a loving mother called on the head-master in the City to intimate her intention of placing her little boy in the school as soon as the new building would be finished, and also to ask if she would be allowed to see the room in which her dear child would be taught.

It was a great pity the building was not advanced enough at the time to permit of her securing a corner for "her darling pet."

*
**

The mother to be most dreaded is the one whose husband has left her for India, or some other warm climate. She is restless, inquisitive, and never satisfied. Each remark you make to her son brings her on the school premises for inquiries. She writes letter upon letter, pays visit upon visit.

Once a week her son brings you a little note in the following style:

"Mrs. X. presents her compliments to Mr. So-and-so, and begs that her son may be excused for not having prepared his lesson, as he had a bad headache last night."

A husband may be a nuisance in a house, but when I was a school-master I always thought he was a great improvement to it.

*
**

(In the Examination Room.)

Sometimes parents send up their sons for scholarship examinations with very little luggage.

I remember a dear little boy, between ten and eleven, who was a candidate for one of our vacant scholarships.

On reaching the seat that was assigned to him, he was provided with the Latin paper by the school secretary, and presented with half a ream of beautiful writing paper for his answers.

We thought he did not appear very busy, and presently, as I came up to him, I spoke a few kind words and gave him a little pat on the back.

"Well, how are you getting on?" I said.

"Please, sir, I can't do this paper. I don't know what it is about," he said, looking at me as if for help.

"Don't you know any Latin?" I inquired.

"Yes, sir; I know my first two declensions."

"Is that all the Latin you know?"

"Yes, sir."

"I suppose you won't take up Greek, will you?"

"I expect I had better not, sir, as I have never learned any," he replied, with his eyes half out of their sockets. "Is it difficult, sir?" he suggested, thinking I was not looking satisfied with his answer.

"Not very," I replied; "but if I were you I would not have my first try at it to-day."

"Thank you, sir," said my little friend.

"Do you know any French?" I then asked.

"Please, sir, mamma taught me a few sentences."

"Well, let me hear."

"Please, sir, I know *Quelle heure est-il?* and *Comment vous portez-vous?*"

"Any grammar?"

"No, sir."

"Don't you know the French for *I shall have?*"

"No, sir, I don't think I do."

"Do you know any mathematics?"

"Do you mean arithmetic, sir?"

"Yes, I do."

"Please, sir, I can do addition, subtraction, multiplication, and short division."

"I suppose you will try the English subjects. Do you know any English?"

"Yes, sir, I can speak English," he said, looking at me with surprise.

"Of course you can," I replied; "but you know some history, I suppose. Have you ever read any English history?"

"Yes, sir, I have read 'Robinson Crusoe.'"

"Well, well, my poor boy, I am afraid you have not much chance of getting a scholarship."

"Haven't I?" said the dear child, and he burst into tears. Then he handed me a letter, which was addressed to the head-master.

It was a supplication from his mother. Her little boy was very clever, she said, and she hoped he would not be judged by what he actually knew, but by what she was sure he would be able to learn if admitted into the school.

Poor child! we comforted him as well as we could, and sent him back to his mamma. He was very miserable.



Ladies are sometimes great at testimonials, and they must think it very ungentlemanly of men not to favor their candidates.

When our head science mastership was vacant, over a hundred applications were lodged with the head-master for his consideration. I remember that among the candidates there was one who was only provided with a single testimonial, and this from a lady (an old lady, I imagine). The testimonial was to the effect that "she had known Mr. P. for many years. He was a good and steady young man, and she knew he was very fond of science."

This testimonial failed to secure the appointment for its owner.

XVII.

THE ORIGIN OF ANGLOMANIA AND ANGLOPHOBIA IN ENGLAND. — A TYPICAL FRENCHMAN. — TOO MUCH OF AN ENGLISHMAN. — A REMARKABLE FRENCH MASTER. — JOHN BULL MADE TO GO TO CHURCH BY A FRENCHMAN. — A NOBLE AND THANKLESS CAREER. — A PLACE OF LEARNING. — MONS. AND ESQUIRE. — ALL LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. — ONE EXCEPTION. — WONDERFUL ADDRESSES.

The French in England are of two sorts, those who, by their intelligence, industry, and perseverance, have succeeded in building up an honorable position for themselves, and those who, by the lack of these qualities, vegetate there as they would be pretty sure to do anywhere.

The former do not all love the land of their adoption, but they all respect it. The latter,

unwilling to lay their poverty at their own door, throw the blame upon England for not having understood them, and they have not a good word to say for her. It never occurred to them that it was theirs to study and understand England, and that England is not to be blamed for not having studied them and changed her ways to accommodate them.

They never part with a shilling without remarking that for a penny they would be able to obtain the same value in France. You often wonder how it is they stick to this country instead of honoring their own with their presence.

*
**

I have always been an admirer of that worthy Frenchman who carries his patriotism to the extent of buying all his clothing in France. He declares it impossible to wear English garments, and almost impossible to wear out French ones. Besides, he does not see why he should not give his country the benefit of some of the guineas he has picked up over here. Like every child of France, he has the love of good linen, and according to him the article is only to be found in Paris.

So he goes about in his narrow-brimmed hat, and turned-down collar fastened low in the neck, and finished off with a tiny black tie, a large expanse of shirt-front, and boots with high heels and pointed toes. As he goes along the street, he hears people whisper: "There's a Frenchman!" But, far from objecting to that, he rather likes it, and he is right.

He speaks bad English, and assures you that you require very few words to make yourself understood of the people. He does not go so far as Figaro, but his English vocabulary is of the most limited.

Without making any noise about it, he sends his guinea to all the French Benevolent Societies in England, and wherever the tricolor floats he is of the party.

He likes the English, and recognizes their solid qualities; but as he possesses many of his own, he keeps to his native stock.

*
**

How this good Frenchman does shine by the side of another type, a type which, I am happy to say, is rare—the one who drops his country.

The latter, when he speaks of England, says: "*We* do this, *we* do that, in England," not "The English do this, the English do that." He would like to say, "We English," but he hardly dares go that length.

He dresses *à l'anglaise* with a vengeance, makes it a point to frequent only English houses, and spends a good deal of his time in running down his compatriots.

He does not belong to any of the French societies or clubs in England. These establishments, however, do not miss him much more than his own country.

I once knew one of this category. His name ended with an *e* mute preceded by a double consonant. The *e* mute was a real sore to him, the grief of his life. Without it he might have passed for English. It was too provoking to be thus balked, and, as he signed his name, he would dissimulate the poor offending little vowel, so that his name should appear to end at the double consonant.

He was not a genius.

*
**

Acting under the theory of Figaro, "*Qu'il n'est pas nécessaire de tenir les choses pour en raisonner*," I have heard an Englishman, engaged in teaching French, maintain that it was not necessary to be able to speak the French language to teach it.

On the other hand, I once heard an eminent Frenchman hold that the less English a French master knew the more fit he was to teach French.

Both gentlemen begged their audience to understand that they made their statements on their own sole responsibility.

*
**

I never met a French master who had made his fortune, nor have you, I imagine.

I once met in England a French master who had not written a French grammar.

I was one day introduced to a Frenchman who keeps a successful school in the Midland

counties. He makes it a rule to sternly refuse to let his boys go home in the neighboring town before one o'clock on Sundays. When parents ask him as a special favor to allow their sons to come to their house on Saturday night or early on Sunday morning, he answers: "I am sorry I cannot comply with your request. It has come to my knowledge that there are parents who do not insist on their children going to church, and I cannot allow any of my pupils to go home before they have attended divine service."

John Bull made to go to church by a Frenchman! The idea was novel, and I thought extremely funny.

*
**

To teach "the art of speaking and writing the French language correctly" is a noble but thankless career in England.

In France, the Government grants a pension to, and even confers the Legion of Honor upon, an English master [13] after he has taught his language in a *lycée* for a certain number of years.

The Frenchman who has taught French in England all his lifetime is allowed, when he is done for, to apply at the French Benevolent Society for a free passage to France, where he may go and die quietly out of sight.

*
**

If you look at the advertisements published daily in the "educational" columns of the papers, you may see that compatriots of mine give private lessons in French at a shilling an hour, and teach the whole language in 24 or 26 lessons. Why not 25? I always thought there must be something cabalistic about the number 26. These gentlemen have to wear black coats and chimney-pots. How can they do it if their wives do not take in mangling?

Mystery.

*
**

In a southern suburb of London, I remember seeing a little house covered, like a booth at a fair, with boards and announcements that spoke to the passer-by of all the wonders to be found within.

On the front-door there was a plate with the inscription:

"Mons. D., of the University of France."

Now Englishmen who address Frenchmen as "Mons." [14] should be forgiven. They unsuccessfully aim at doing a correct thing. But a Frenchman dubbing himself "Mons." publishes a certificate of his ignorance.

The house was a double-fronted one.

On the right window there was the inscription:

"French Classes for Ladies."

On the left one:

"French Classes for Gentlemen."

The sexes were separated as at the Turkish Baths.

On a huge board, placed over the front door, I read the following:

*"French Classes for Ladies and Gentlemen.
Greek, Latin, and Mathematical Classes.
Art and Science Department.
Music, Singing, and Dancing taught.
Private Lessons given, Families waited upon.
Schools attended.
For Terms and Curriculum, apply within."*

What a saving of trouble and expense it would have been to this living encyclopædia if he had only mentioned what he did not teach!

Since I have called your attention to the expression *Mons.*, and reminded you of its proper meaning, never send a letter to a Frenchman with the envelope addressed as *Mons.*

I know, dear American reader, that *you* never do. But you have friends. Well, tell them to

write *Monsieur* in full; or, as cobblers in their back parlors are now addressed as *Esquires*, rather confer the same honor upon a Frenchman. He will take it as a compliment.

Democracy is making progress in England. Where is the time when only land-owners, barristers, graduates of the Universities, were addressed as Esquires?

All ladies and gentlemen in England now.

*
**

Not all, though.

A young lady friend, who visits the poor in her district, called one day at a humble dwelling.

She knocked at the door, and on a woman opening it, asked to see Mrs. —.

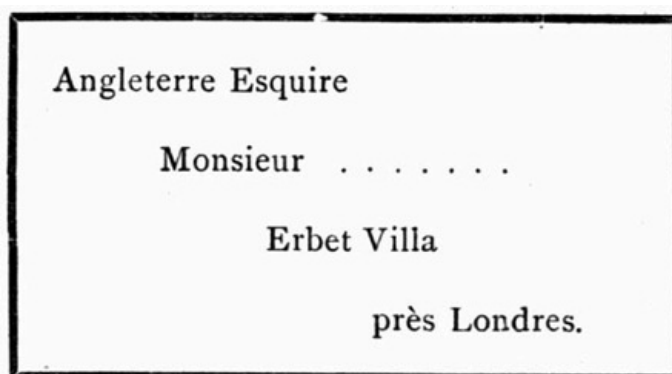
"Oh! very well," said the woman, and, leaving the young lady in the street, she went inside, and called out at the top of her voice:

"Ada, tell the *lady* on the second floor that a *young person* from the district wants to see her."

Apropos of "Esquire" I should like to take the opportunity of paying a well-deserved compliment to the Postal Authorities in England.

Some eight years ago, I lived in the Herbert Road, Shooter's Hill, near London.

After three weeks of wonderful peregrinations, a letter, addressed in the following manner, duly reached me from France:



My dear compatriot had heard that "Esquire" had to be put somewhere, or else the letter would not reach me.

*
**

This is not the only letter addressed to me calculated to puzzle the postman.

A letter was once brought to me with the following high-flown inscription:

"Al gentilissimo cavaliere professore
Signor...."

But what is even this, compared to the one I received from a worthy Bulgarian, and which was addressed to

"Monsieur....
Métropolitain de Saint Paul."

I was at the time teaching under the shadow of London's great cathedral.

[13] Among the nominations in the Legion of Honor, published on the 14th of July, 1884, I noticed the name of the English master (an Englishman) in the *lycée* of Bordeaux.

[14] "*Mons.*, a familiar and contemptuous abbreviation of *Monsieur.*"—LITTRÉ, "Dictionnaire de la Langue Française."

XVIII.

THE WAY TO LEARN MODERN LANGUAGES.

I have always felt a great deal of sympathy, and even respect, for that good, honest, straightforward young British boy who does not easily understand that in French "a musical friend" is not necessarily *un ami à musique*, nor "to sit on the committee," *s'asseoir sur le comité*, unless the context indicates that it is the painful operation which is meant. Poor boy! For him a foreign language is only his own, with another vocabulary; and so, when he does a piece of translation, he carefully replaces on his paper each word of his English text by one of the equivalents that he finds for it in his dictionary, rarely failing to choose the wrong one, as I have already said. Now comes *que*. Shall he put the subjunctive or the indicative? He has learnt his grammar: he could, if occasion required, recite the rules that apply to the employment of the terrible subjunctive mood. He has even, once or twice in his life, written an exercise on the subject, and as it was headed "Exercise on the Subjunctive Mood," he went through it with calm confidence, putting all the verbs in the subjunctive, including those that it would have been advisable to put in the indicative. This done, he was not supposed to commit any more mistakes on this important point of grammar. He might as well be expected to be an experienced swimmer after once reading Captain Webb's "Art of Swimming," and going through the various evolutions indicated in the pamphlet, *à sec* on the floor of his papa's parlor.

I admit that the French teacher of a public school ought to be a good philologist to make his lessons attractive to the students of the upper forms, and insure their success under examination; I admit that he should know English thoroughly, to be able to explain to them the delicacies of the French language, and maintain good discipline in his classes; I admit that he should be able to teach grammar, philology, history, literature; but I maintain that he ought never to lose sight of the most important object of the study of a living language,—the putting of it into practice; he should, above all things, and by all means, aim at making his pupils speak French. It is not enough that he should speak to them in French, even in the upper forms, where he would be perfectly understood: understanding a language and speaking it are two very different things. Neither will he attain his end by means of dull manuals of imaginary conversations with the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker; these will, at most, be useful in helping a foreigner to ask for what he wants at a *table d'hôte*. You will not get grown-up, intelligent, and well-educated boys to come out of their shells, unless you make it worth their while. Now, Englishmen, like Americans, love argument, very often for argument's sake, and every school-boy, in England as in America, is a member of some society or committee, and at its meetings tries his wings, discusses, harangues, and prepares himself for that great parliamentary life, which is the strength of the nation.

Then, I ask, why not turn this love of discussion to account?

Start a French debating society in every school, and you will teach your generation to speak French. Such a proposition may sound bold, but it has been tried in several public schools, and has proved a complete success.

What cannot a teacher do that has succeeded in winning the esteem and affection of his pupils? First, make them respect you, then gain their hearts, and you will lead the young by a thread.

Take twenty or thirty boys, old enough to appreciate the interest you feel in them, and say to them, "My young friends, let us arrange to meet once a week, and see if we cannot speak French together. We will chat about any thing you like: politics even. Do not be afraid to open your lips, it is only *la première phrase qui coûte*. I am neither a Pecksniff nor a pedant, a dotard nor a wet blanket; in your company, I feel as young as the youngest among you. Do not imagine that I shall bring you up for the slightest error of pronunciation you make. I remember the time when I murdered your language, and I should be sorry to cast the first stone at you. At first I shall only correct your glaring mistakes; by degrees, you will make fewer and fewer, although, alas! you will very likely always make some. What does it matter? I guarantee that in a few months you will be able to understand all that is said to you in French, and express intelligibly in the same language any idea that may pass through your brain."

These little French parliaments work admirably; the earliest were started in two or three English schools four or five years ago. Each has its president—the head French teacher of the school, its honorary and assistant secretaries, and, if you please, its treasurer, who

supplies the members with two or three good French papers, and, when the finances of the society permit, provides the means of giving a *soirée littéraire*. I have seen the minute-book of one of these interesting associations. Since its formation, this particular debating society has altered the whole map of Europe, greatly to the advantage of the United Kingdom. The young debaters have upset any number of governments, at home and abroad, done away with women's rights, and declared, by a crushing majority, that ladies who can make good puddings are far more useful members of society than those who can make good speeches. Young British boys have very strong sentiments against women's rights. In literature, the respective merits of the Classicists and the Romanticists have been discussed, and the "three unities" declared absurd and tyrannical by these young champions of freedom.

The speakers are not allowed to read their speeches, but may use notes for reference, and I notice that speakers, who at first only ventured short remarks, soon grew bold enough to hold forth for ten minutes at a time. In many instances, the president has had to adjourn a debate to the next meeting, on account of the number of orators wishing to take part in it. These minutes, written in very good French indeed, do great credit to the young secretary who enters them. I have myself been present at meetings of these societies, and I assure you that if you could see these young fellows rise from their seats, and, bowing respectfully to the president, say to him: "*Monsieur le Président, je demande la parole,*" you would agree with me that, so far as good order, perfect courtesy, and unlimited respect for opposite views are concerned, these small gatherings would compare favorably with the meetings of honorables and even right-honorables that are held at the Capitol, the Westminster Palace, and the *Palais Bourbon*.

It is clear to my mind that, by such means, English boys can be made to speak French in the most interesting manner, and the one best suited to their taste. I firmly believe that if the great schools, public or private, were to start similar societies, that if all the young men knowing a little French were to form in their districts, such associations under the leadership of able and cheerful Frenchmen, England, or America for that matter, would in a few years, have a generation of French-speaking men.

I have always been at a loss to understand how boys who have been studying a language for nine or ten years should leave school perfectly unable to converse intelligibly in that language for five minutes together. It seems nothing short of scandalous.

Yet the reason is not far to be found. In England, at any rate, modern languages are taught like dead languages: they are taught through the eyes, whereas they should be taught through the ears and mouth.

The French debating society seems to me the best mode of solving the difficulty. I have often given this piece of advice to John Bull, and I myself founded a successful French debating society in England. Let Jonathan forgive my presumption if I avail myself of his kind and generous hospitality to give him the same advice.

XIX.

ENGLISH AND FRENCH SCHOOLBOYS. — THEIR CHARACTERISTICS. — THE QUALITIES OF THE ENGLISH SCHOOLBOY. — WHAT IS REQUIRED OF A MASTER TO WIN.

I have often been asked the question, "Are English boys better or worse than French ones?"

Well, I believe the *genus* boy to be pretty much the same all the world over. Their characteristics do not show in the same way, because educational systems are different.

Both English and French boys are particularly keen in finding out the peculiarities of a master, and taking his measure.

They are both inclined to bestow their affection and respect on the man who is possessed of moral and intellectual power; it is in their nature to love and respect what is powerful, lofty, and good.

Boys are what masters make them.

Both English and French boys are lazy if you give them a chance; both are industrious if you give them inducements to work. They will not come out of their shells unless you make it worth their while.

Both are as fond of holidays as any school-master alive.

*
**

French boys are more united among themselves, because their life would be intolerable if close friendship did not spring up between them, and help them to endure a secluded time of hardship and privations.

English boys are prouder, because they are freer. Their pride is born of liberty itself.

The former work more, the latter play more.

But comparisons are odious, especially when made between characters studied under such different circumstances.

*
**

What I can affirm is that a Frenchman need not fear that English boys (such as I have known at any rate) will take advantage of his shortcomings as regards his pronunciation of the English language to make his life uncomfortable. I have always found English boys charitable and generous.

A Frenchman will experience no difficulty in getting on with English schoolboys if his character wins their respect, and his kindness their affection; if he sympathizes with them in their difficulties; if he deals with them firmly, but always in a spirit of fair play, truth, and justice; if he is

"To their faults a little blind,
And to their virtues very kind."

THE END.

Appendix.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is a joke."—(MARK TWAIN.)

PAGE.

7. *Appartement de garçon*, "bachelor's quarters," not "waiter's apartment."
12. *Fors l'honneur*, "except honor" (a phrase used by Francis I. of France, when he announced his defeat at Pavia to his mother).
13. *Gare du Nord*, "Great Northern Railway Terminus," in Paris (celebrated for its Cloak Room, where, on his arrival from England, John Bull deposits his baggage of superfluous virtue).
16. *Très bien, Monsieur*, "Very well, sir." (I owe to the reader many apologies for translating such an *idiomatic* phrase as this.)
19. *Qui frise ses cheveux et la cinquantaine*, literally, "Who curls her hair and fifty summers." (The word *friser* means both "to curl" and "to border on." I hope the reader will see the joke.)
21. *Recherché*, "refined."
22. *Planche*, "a plank."
33. *Allons me voila sauvé*, "Now I am saved."
41. *Migraine*, "Sick headache," an indisposition to which French ladies are subject, when they are reading a novel and do not wish to be disturbed by callers.
48. *Elle se retira....* "She retired to her room and prepared for bed. But who could sleep? Sleep!"
48. *Celui qui écrit*, literally "He who writes."
49. *Poitrine*, "chest" (part of the body). *Caleçons* (unmentionables).
49. *Il feutra, il gaucha*, formed from the nouns *feutre* ("felt," material) and *gauche*

("left,"contrary of "right").

51. "Look at Pierrot hanging
Because he did not restore the book;
If the book he had restored
Pierrot wouldn't have been hanged."

FAC-SIMILE OF JOHN BULL, JUNIOR'S, EXERCISE.

1. Europe is a part of the world.
2. Asia is a part of the world.
3. Africa is a part of the world.
4. America is a part of the world.
5. My father is in France.
6. My cousin is in Germany.
7. Your brother is in Dresden.
8. Where is thy sister? She is in Paris.

54. *Egal*, "Equal."

55. *Savoir*, "to know." The future is *je saurai*.

57. *Vouloir*, "to want." The future is *je voudrai*.

63. *Je serai*, "I shall be."

Je serais, "I should be."

73. The feminine words respectively mean "trumpet," "medicine," "navy," "sculpture," whereas the masculine names respectively mean "trumpeter," "doctor," "sailor," "sculptor." This is an old examination question, a time-honored chestnut of the University of London.

73. *Restait cette redoutable infanterie....* "There remained the redoubtable infantry of the Spanish army, whose big close battalions, like so many towers, but towers that could repair their own gaps, stood unshaken in the awful din of battle and fired from all parts" (with my apologies to the shade of Bossuet).

74. *La fille de feu....* "The daughter of my good and esteemed deceased cousin is always welcome."

74. *Mon frère....* "My brother is wrong and my sister is right."

74. *Elle partit....* "She left the following morning."

75. *Diab!e!...* "Good heavens! the old man is capricious!"

76. *Je laisse Renaud....* "I leave Renaud in the gardens of Armida." (The worthy boy took *Renaud* for *Renard*, a fox—that's near enough.)

76. *Chaque âge a ses plaisirs*. "Each age has its pleasures."

77. *Les exploits d'Hercule....* "The exploits of Hercules are mere play compared to."

77. *Monsieur, ne vous retournez pas*. "Sir, do not look round."

78. *Il raccommodait....* "He mended old shoes."

78. *Baissant les yeux*, "Casting down her eyes."

84. *Dimanche*, "Sunday."

84. *Manche*, near enough to *manger* (to eat) for Johnny.

84. *Cordon bleu*, skilful cook. (Teetotalers in England wear blue ribbons, hence the boy's confusion.)

89. *Baccalauréat-ès-sciences*, degree of B.Sc.

92. *Avec de belles dents....* "With fine teeth never was a woman ugly."

93. *Arriver, naître, venir, sortir, partir*, "to arrive," "to be born," "to come," "to go out," "to set out."

120. *Savate*, boxing and kicking; *canne*, cane (fencing expression).

135. *Avez-vous du mal?* "Are you hurt?" The Englishman understands *Avez-vous deux malles?* "Have you two trunks?"

135. *Garçon, j'ai faim*, "Waiter, I'm hungry."

138. *Ses amis*, "his friends." *Seize amis*, "sixteen friends."
146. *Quelle heure est-il?* "What o'clock is it?" *Comment vous portez-vous?* "How do you do?"
152. *Qu'il n'est pas nécessaire....* "That it is not necessary to know any thing of a subject to speak on it."
153. *Lycee*, "French public school."
159. *Un ami à musique* would mean a friend who could give off a tune by being pressed upon.
163. *Monsieur le Président, je demande la parole*, "Mr. President, I ask for the floor."

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