

Rooper stayed until the middle of the day on Friday. A new feature was added to his annual visit which was both interesting and suggestive to all of us. One of the juniors gave a history lesson to Class II. by special request of Mr. Rooper, who wished to hear one of our usual criticism lessons. The subject was Henry IV. Mr. Rooper did not ask us for verbal criticisms only, but suggested that some of us should illustrate the way in which we should have treated the same subject. Four other lessons were accordingly given, and we were certainly surprised to see from what different standpoints the same subjects could be approached. The idea is most suggestive as showing how monotony and sameness may be avoided and variety introduced in teaching. Mr. Rooper gave us a most interesting little resumé of the way in which he had once treated the same subject, pointing out the importance of the picturesque element in history lessons to little children.

Ambleside has been "speeding its parting guests," but looking more beautiful than ever in the snow. We have been trying to take "mental pictures" of Loughrigg on these clear moonlight nights, as it looms behind the frosted and glistening trees. We shall indeed have pleasant memories of its beauty at all seasons, now that the time has come to say good-bye.

With best Christmas wishes from

THE STUDENTS.

Oct. 10th, 1899.

DEAR EDITOR,

I think ex-students may be interested in the following account of the National Home Reading Union taken from *Literature*. I think it would be very helpful to any who wish to go through regular courses of reading, and cannot give up as much time as is required by the "College by Post."

"Although this excellent organization has completed the tenth year of its existence, it is less well known than it deserves to be. It may be regarded as an intellectual mission. To name the scholars who during the past ten years have helped to draw up its 'book list' and to conduct its courses is to name many of our most eminent teachers in literature, history, art, and science. This service has been the free gift of the learned to those who are less happily endowed. The small subscription paid by reading members does not defray the cost of printing the magazines and the inevitable office expenses of the Home Reading Union. For a small fee, varying from one shilling to three shillings and sixpence per annum, according to the course of study which he pursues, each member is provided with a list of the best books in his particular subject, a monthly magazine containing what may be described as a collection of printed lectures, the opportunity of submitting essays for criticism, and demanding the explanation of difficulties, as well as numerous minor aids to study.

"In the selection of books for the members of the National Home Reading Union circumstances impose inevitable restrictions. One of the first requisites in the books which they are expected to possess is, necessarily, cheapness; and the Union, thanks to the kindly co-operation of several firms of publishers, has secured many cheap editions of books which, although recognized as suitable for large numbers of readers, had been obtainable hitherto only at a considerable cost. Another important qualification, considering the standard of culture of the majority of the members of the National Home Reading Union, is that the books should be attractive in style. It is a

sine qua non that they should speak with authority. But the Union has got over the obvious difficulty presented by the various grades of wealth and culture of its members by an ingenious classification of books. It divides them into (1) cheap, short, simple books, which are placed in the 'required' list; (2) more expensive or more advanced books, which are 'recommended'; and (3) the learned and usually costly books, which are relegated to the 'reference' list—books which most students will be content to borrow from a library.

"Members of the Union have the option of joining either of three sections, termed the 'Young People's,' the 'General Course' and the 'Special Courses' respectively; and each section has its own magazine. Almost all subjects of general interest are treated of in each of the three sections.

"A strong feature in the organization of this guild of learning is the collection of its members into reading circles, for co-operation in study may be regarded as the essential principle of its work. For some subjects portfolios containing portraits, views of places and buildings, specimens of leaves and fruit, and in the case of Egyptology, for example, the commoner trophies of exploration are prepared by the Union for loan to the circles. The last of the Union's methods cannot be passed over, although at the close of the holiday season it is of less interest than it will be in another nine months' time—the Summer Assembly, which is held in the place best suited for the illustration of the winter's work. Any who wish to take advantage of its guidance, or are willing to assist in conducting its work, may obtain further information regarding the Union by applying to the Secretary, Surrey House, Victoria Embankment."

Hoping that readers of our Magazine may find this useful, if not already too well known.

Yours truly,

M. C.

"THE ARCHTON NEWS."

WE, the editors of the aforesaid, think that the readers of *L' Umile Pianta* may be interested in a short account of the structure and growth of this schoolroom Magazine.

Originally its contributors were all of one household, though now it has been enlarged, and any members of the family may add to its wit or wisdom. It owes its origin to the idea that the schoolroom is a town, Archton by name, whose inhabitants naturally wish to have a journal of their own. Another branch of the family is called an outlying suburb, and has taken the name of Archton Towers. The contents of our last number were roughly as follows:—A serial story, in which each chapter is by a different author; a prize essay; a drawing competition, viz., an original drawing from *The Water Babies*; crambo, *i.e.*, given a word and a question, answer the latter and introduce the word in the form of poetry; accounts of the A. D. C., a flourishing body which gave "Strewwelpeter" in moving tableaux during the summer; of the two museums, and of the Archton Geographical Explorers. This intrepid company ambles round the country over hill and dale, seeking what it may devour for its Nature Note Book and its Magazine; small incidents working up into copy, quite worthy of a special war correspondent! Each member has taken the name of some famous explorer, and all work for *The Archton News* is signed under these *nom de plume*. Amongst other features are a farmer's calendar, *i.e.*, notes on the weather and live stock (pets), and editorial notes.

The magazine has a specially designed cover in the colours of the town, pink and green, and bears its crest and motto—a horse-shoe and the words, "Be merry and wise." Its certified circulation has risen to about fourteen, as it goes round among various relations and friends.

STANLEY AND FRANKLIN.