

Contemporary Thought.

THE way for the organizing of attractive public amusements is being opened by the taste and talent developed in all our schools. The musical instruction of school children, in all our larger towns, is sending forth multitudes of youth who will not be satisfied with street music, the blare of the beer-garden or the attractions of the lower order of public entertainments. It is perfectly feasible to provide a great variety of musical performances, all of a genuine character, at nominal cost, which shall be open to everybody, and which anybody can enjoy. How completely the musical affectation of the fashionable concert-going public has banished the whole beautiful world of ballad-singing and patriotic harmonies, we all know. Certainly, out of this vast body of graduates and their families, can be found the performers and audiences to create a new musical life in every considerable town.—*N. E. Journal of Education.*

THE subject of examinations and transfers of pupils is one of the most difficult of solution of any connected with our city school system. A few years ago educators thought that they had found the true solution in per cented written examinations. Such examinations were held in every subject in which it was possible to hold them. The per cents were posted up in the offices of superintendents, exhibited and commented upon in the different schools, carried around in triumph by the principals, paraded in the daily papers, and published in the school reports. But it has been found that attaching undue importance to per cents leads to the driving and cramming process; to narrow, rut teaching; offers an inducement to teachers to resort to improper devices and expedients, which keep the children from thinking for themselves, to adopt pernicious methods that contract rather than expand the mind, that retard rather than develop the reasoning faculties. For these reasons there is a growing sentiment in favor of their abolishment.—*Supt. Peaslee, Cincinnati.*

It is not true, as some say, that there is nothing original in it, but certainly by far the greater part is the mere outpouring of memory. Subjects are tapped, and the current flows without stopping. Wonderful as it is, it is certainly oppressive after a time, and his departure is rather a relief than otherwise. Dundas, who is very agreeable, and very well informed, said to-day that he was a bore; but that he is not. It certainly must be rather oppressive after a certain time, and would be intolerable, if it was not altogether free from conceit, vanity, and arrogance—unassuming, and the real genuine gushing out of overflowing stores of knowledge treasured up in his mind. We walked together for a long time the day before yesterday, when he talked of the history he is writing. I asked him if he was still collecting materials, or had begun to write. He said he was writing while collecting, going on upon the fund of his already acquired knowledge, and he added, that it was very mortifying to find how much there was of which he was wholly ignorant.—*Macaulay as a Talker, in the Greville Memoirs.*

WE are surprised and sorry to see that a statute has been passed by the Senate of Toronto University, providing for the creation of four addition-

al scholarships at junior matriculation. The principle of awarding prizes and scholarships from public funds is bad in any case. Why should the citizens generally and other poor students in particular be taxed for the benefit of a select few who, because of greater advantages, or possibly by means of better memories, are able to take a higher marking at examinations? We are aware that distinguished men support the custom, and some have gone so far as to affirm that they themselves could never have got through college but for the help afforded by scholarships. This may well be questioned, for every year sees men completing their collegiate courses with credit, who were as impecunious at setting out as their most brilliant competitors could possibly have been, and who have made their way without the aid of the exceptional parts of the latter. The argument that these prospective rewards are necessary as a stimulus to ambition, or an incentive to draw students to the halls of the college, is even worse in theory and unsupported by obvious facts. Above all, it surely is eminently inconsistent for an institution which is crippled for want of funds, and declares itself unable to establish chairs in some of the most essential departments of liberal culture, to divert any portion of its income to so unnecessary and doubtful a use.—*Canada School Journal.*

DR. RAND, after a connection of some two years with Acadia, as Professor of the Theory and Practice of Education, and History, has resigned his position to accept a professorship in Toronto Baptist College. In him Acadia has lost a strong man. His connection with the college, though short, was sufficiently long to exhibit his proficiency in the art of teaching as well as to endear him to all. Perhaps the highest compliment which can be paid to the Doctor's abilities is to say he is a good teacher. He needs, however, no commendation of ours to establish this fact. His connection with the cause of education in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick has become a matter of history. It is one thing to have knowledge, but quite another thing to have the power of imparting it. The possession of the latter is indispensable in the teacher; and it was possessed in no ordinary degree by Dr. Rand. That he has an enviable faculty of securing attention by getting the student in love with a subject, all who have met him in the classroom will be quite willing to affirm. Perhaps one of the best things to be said of one at his departure is that he is missed. This may truthfully be said of Dr. Rand. Indeed, so large a place has he won in the affections of the students that it is difficult for them to be reconciled to his departure.—*Athenaeum.*

THE utterances of Dr. Purslow and Mr. Houston on the scholarship question have drawn upon these gentlemen several base and cowardly attacks from an anonymous correspondent of the *Mail*. The letters are clearly the outcome of the personal animus of the writer. They are a tissue of falsehood and malicious misrepresentation. The assailant does not make direct charges, but takes the utmost license in insinuation and innuendo. Statements of this nature, made under cover of anonymity, show only too plainly the character of their author. Whether we agree with Mr. Houston and Dr. Purslow or not, we must give them credit for expressing their views and furthering their aims in an open and above-board manner, and this is not a virtue of their opponents. The

truth is that Mr. Houston's energetic efforts for university reform have awakened into unscrupulous activity persons who never were active before—at least not active in any movement which would benefit the university. Mr. Houston was elected by the graduates of the university as their representative on the Senate because he has always shown a vigorous and intelligent interest in university affairs. The undergraduates have shown their appreciation of his views by electing him for the second time to the highest office in their gift—the presidency of the Literary Society. He has been a regular contributor to the *Varsity* ever since its inception, and his articles therein have been widely copied and comment upon by both American and Canadian journals. In short, during the last ten years there has been scarcely an organization or enterprise calculated to benefit the university to which Mr. Houston has not rendered valuable assistance. It is impossible, then, that his reputation can be injured by the scurrilous insinuations of an anonymous newspaper scribbler, and the attempt meets only the contempt of all right-thinking men.—*Varsity.*

WE are sorry to find that some words in our last number have been construed by one reader at least as a renunciation of University Confederation. Nothing could be further from our meaning. We are firm in the faith that a secular university with religious colleges is the true solution of the question between secular and religious education; and we remain just as convinced as ever that a combination of all our resources and a concentration of our academical life are necessary to enable the Province of Ontario to maintain an institution worthy of the name of a university, and capable in the long run of holding its own against wealthy rivals on the other side of the line. The University of Toronto has not at present one-quarter of the revenue requisite to keep it, in the scientific department especially, on a level with the requirements of the times, while its professors, instead of having any leisure for research and for the advancement of learning and science, are engaged without remission in turning the educational wheel like the teachers of a common school. Nor is there the slightest prospect of any further endowment so long as the great denominations stand aloof and give their political support to separate universities of their own. Moreover, this separation, which is inevitably attended by a certain degree of antagonism, stamps the Provincial University with distinctive secularism and thus makes it sectarian in that sense. The president may with perfect truth disclaim any opposition to religious education, but he cannot get rid of the appearance or indeed entirely of the reality. We would earnestly commend this last consideration to those members of the University of Toronto who are either openly opposing confederation or tacitly contributing to the miscarriage of the scheme by cold approval and faint support. We should be exceedingly sorry to be misunderstood, because this evidently is the turning-point; the question whether the Province is to have a great university or not will soon be decided, and it will be decided once for all. If confederation is finally rejected the religious universities will appeal to their friends, who will respond to the appeal, and the "one-horse" system will strike roots such as no minister of education, even if he were much more like Hercules than party politicians are, would ever dream of attempting to pluck up.—*Week.*