

Contemporary Thought.

SOME months ago the Education Department issued a circular, warning teachers, inspectors, and trustees against "the illegal introduction into the Public Schools of annotated editions of the authorized Text Books, particularly the Fourth Reader. Trustees who do not prevent the use of such annotations in schools are liable to the loss of the school grant, and teachers who permit their use are liable to have their certificates suspended. It would be well for parents and guardians who complain of the cost of school books, to see, when they are asked to make purchases of this kind, that they are not spending their money for what is unnecessary, and at the same time contributing to a violation of the law. *Globe*.

SPEAKING of the action of the council of Grey in their advocacy of a shortening of the holidays for public schools, the *Mail* says: "Six weeks is short enough time in which to recuperate and gather strength for the next year. And to reduce this time one-half would be simple, downright folly. It would bear as heavily upon the teachers as upon the pupils. To allow young, growing and active little boys and girls but four weeks—allowing one for Christmas—out of fifty-two, would be to make their life, at its most important period, nothing but a weary round: and the result, from an educational, as well as a physical, point of view, would be disastrous. We sincerely trust that the teaching profession and Education Department will give no sort of countenance to this most injudicious proposal of the county council of Grey."

Über Land und Meer (Leipzig).—Since we Germans have, in our political relations, broken with the past and made such a mighty step forward, we have suddenly become extraordinarily zealous for reform in all matters connected with our nationality. We must have a national style for our public buildings, our private houses, and our literature; even the language of our classical writers must be "purified," as not being sufficiently German for us! It is not surprising, then, that we have become dissatisfied with our alphabet! In its present state, we are told, it in no way admits of "a uniform and correct national orthography," but, on the contrary, condemns us to "a false mode of writing, interlarded with numberless rules and exceptions!" So, to lend it a helping hand, Dr. Wilhelm Frohne, Philolog, of Spandau, proposes in his "Instruction-book of strict Phonetic Orthography and correct pronunciation," a new "Phonetic Alphabet" consisting of fifty-two letters. For every compound (double or treble) consonant, and for every long vowel, a new letter will be employed, so that the alphabet will consist of thirty-nine consonants, six long and six short vowels: each letter will further be called by a new name. Dr. Frohne's ideas certainly deserve attention. It is to be observed that the signs of the New National Alphabet are to be borrowed from the Latins, Greeks and Jews, and the author is of the opinion that "in its new dress, the German language will be much more attractive to foreign nations than heretofore."

An animated controversy has been going on for some time among the eastern American colleges. It is the old discussion, the new learning asserting its right to equal recognition with the old. The

new education is represented by Harvard, the old by Yale and Princeton. On the one hand are arrayed the champions of the ancient classics and the mathematics, on the other the advocates of the modern languages and the natural sciences. It seems to us over here in Canada that the participants in these discussions generally lose sight altogether of the great fact that for the acquisition of a true liberal education it does not matter so much what one studies as *how* he studies it. A consideration of equal importance is the mental attitude of the teacher under whom the education is acquired. By liberal education we mean discipline of the will and the intellect, and the cultivation and training of the moral and the æsthetic sensibilities. This can be done as well by the new learning as the old. Liberal education takes no cognizance of the incidental advantages which may at times be attached to one of these departments or the other. Since, then, the great results of the two kinds of learning, if properly pursued, are the same, we must admit our preference to the elective system of Harvard over the compulsory system of Yale. For Harvard gives great room for the individual and independent development of the student. But Yale seeks to mould the new generation rigidly in the ideal forms of the past, the implication always being that the past is infinitely better than the present or than we can hope the future to be.—*Varsity*.

I ASK a modern march-of-intellect man, what education is for: and he tells me it is to make educated men. I ask what an educated man is: he tells me it is a man whose intelligence has been cultivated, who knows something of the world he lives in—the different races of men, their languages, their histories, and the books they have written; modern science, astronomy, geology, physiology, political economy, mathematics, mechanics, everything, in fact, which an educated man ought to know. Education, according to this, means instruction in everything which human beings have done, thought or discovered; all history, all languages, all sciences. Under this system teaching becomes cramming; an enormous accumulation of propositions of all sorts and kinds is thrust down the students' throats, to be poured out again, I might say vomited out, into examiners' laps! Our old universities are struggling against these absurdities, yet when we look at the work which they on their side are doing, it is scarcely more satisfactory. A young man going to Oxford learns the same things which were taught there two centuries ago: but, unlike the old scholars, he learns no lessons of poverty with it. In his three years' course he will have tasted luxuries unknown to him at home, and contracted habits of self-indulgence which make subsequent hardships unbearable: while his antiquated knowledge, such as it is, has fallen out of the market: there is no demand for him: he is not sustained by the respect of the world, which finds him ignorant of everything in which it is interested. He is called educated; yet, if circumstances throw him on his own resources, he cannot earn a sixpence for himself.—*James Anthony Froude, in Address before the Students of St. Andrews*.

By technical education some persons meant the handicraft training which would prepare a scholar to become a skilled workman—a sort of scientific apprenticeship to a trade. But if this was what

was intended, it is plain that it would not greatly concern pupil teachers or others connected with ordinary schools. You could not set up in such schools a carpenter's shop, a forge, a studio, or a loom, unless you had a qualified artisan at the head of each of them. Nor would it be possible to give special industrial preparations of this kind without prematurely determining the future calling of some of the pupils, teaching to some the special trades which they would certainly not follow, and encroaching seriously on that part of the school hours which ought to be devoted to general training such as is applicable alike to all callings, and which forms the preparation for an intelligent life. But there was another view of technical instruction which deserved more attention. There was growing up around them a general belief that our modes of instruction had been hitherto too bookish, that they dealt rather with words than things, with abstractions rather than the realities of life. It should, it was urged, be part of the training of every child, that he should be taught the right use of his eyes and hands, and that he should be brought into contact with the actual facts and phenomena of the world around him, and taught how to interpret them and how to use them. Pestalozzi, Rousseau and a host of other thinkers, had urged this view, but so far with very little effect. Yet it was plain that, as teachers and parents came to think more of the true meaning of education, this view would more and more prevail.—*Lord Idlesleigh (Sir Stafford Northcote) on Technical Education*.

THERE are two roads to take if you wish to become an electrical engineer. If a young man has gone through any theoretical and partially practical training, he does not require a great deal of actual experience in doing the work itself to fit him for undertaking almost any task pertaining to the calling. But some boys may not be able to spare the time or pay the money for this collegiate part of the training. In that case, they endeavor to find employment in one of the factories of some great company. To obtain admission, however, they must be bright, they must give good promise in the taste they have for mechanical pursuits, as well as in their habits, that they are suited for the profession they seek to enter. Having obtained an entrance, they begin as ordinary employees, doing the simplest kind of work or even drudgery; then they are transferred from one department to another, learning a little at each step they take; until, finally, they have a good knowledge of the manufacturing branch of the profession. From there they should go to the laboratory, where they obtain the scientific knowledge of the business. To know how the different parts are put together is not of itself sufficient; they must be able to tell *why* they are put together in that particular way; it is just that knowledge which makes them electrical engineers. Then they are sent out as assistants to the various electric-lighting stations or are temporarily placed in charge of plants which have just been established, and which some amateur engineer is learning how to run. Finally they may be put in charge of a lighting station,—that is, a building from which the lighting power is furnished for the lamps in the immediate neighborhood; and lastly, they may become members of the engineering corps, and put up the electric lights for people.—*St. Nicholas*.