

Contemporary Thought.

THE Hon. George Bancroft and Prof. F. H. Hedge are believed to be the only living Americans who had an acquaintance with Goethe. Dr. Hedge is about to publish a volume of "Hours with German Authors," for the writing of which his long and intimate acquaintance with German authors and their writings peculiarly fits him.

THERE is once more a wife at the White House. To nearly all men the intense degree of interest which nearly all women have exhibited in the Presidential marriage has furnished more food for thought than the fact of the marriage itself. The wedding cements no nations. It implies no heir to the White House, for the very next occupant of the greatest of human offices may even now be rooming over some hardware store in Albany or Buffalo. It means only that the President takes a wife and stoically undergoes the sharpest curiosity which the great American Paul Pry has ever inflicted on anybody so far. One might have supposed that the President would have chosen to wait until his marriage could have been considered his own affair, yet it must be remembered he is not youthful, and cannot afford to throw away three long years. Anyway, he is well married. Better late than never.—*The Current.*

IT would be difficult to overrate the significance and interest of the ceremony (the opening of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition) which took place at South Kensington. For the first time since our brothers began to leave their narrow island home to rear a Greater Britain beyond the seas, do they all assemble under the old roof-tree, bringing the choicest of their hard-won treasures to lay at the feet of the "Great White Mother," as a proof of how amply they have sustained the family reputation for dogged courage and hard and successful work. The Queen-Empress has seldom exercised a more queenly, a more imperial function; and she might be excused for cherishing a feeling of pride as she walked through the splendors of India, the treasures and trophies of Australasia, the varied products of Canada and the multifarious spoils of her other widely-scattered domains; as she looked upon the loyal and devoted faces of the thousands of subjects, white and dark, many of them come from the ends of the earth to do her homage; and reflected that in the long history of our world to no monarch has such a measure of honour, power and glory, and, we may add with truth, devotion been vouchsafed. This unparalleled Empire began hesitatingly some 300 years ago, under the reign of another great Queen, with a precarious footing on an area of 40,000 square miles, amid a population of savages; it culminates to day with an area of 9,000,000 square miles and a population, including feudatories, of something like 270,000,000, one-seventh of the landed surface of the globe, and one-sixth of its inhabitants, and that excluding the mother country.—*The London Times.*

SCHOOL and industrial exhibitions are becoming more and more common. When their object is to awaken a more intelligent interest in school work, and they honestly exhibit the actual daily results of pupils by exhibiting what attainments they have

made in all forms of school execution, they are excellent: but if they are prepared, in order to catch the breeze of popular applause, they are not worth the time spent in preparing for them. Supt. S. T. Dutton, of New Haven, Conn., is preparing a genuine exhibition for the purpose of showing the people of his city what their schools have been doing in penmanship, drawing, and other forms of hard work. They will comprise penmanship, including copying, dictation, and composition; drawing, including maps, original designs, all kinds of freehand and mechanical drawing, and envelopes of geometrical solids cut from paste-board; busy work, including work done in the primary grades for occupation and training, such as folding, cutting, weaving, peas-work, embroidery, painting, etc.; needle-work, including specimens of plain sewing, darning, knitting, embroidery, or other forms of needle-work; wood-work, including all kinds of work in carpentry, turning, scroll sawing, and carving; and miscellaneous, including models, casts, or any work in metals or leather, whether useful or ornamental.—*New York School Journal.*

THE question of University Confederation is again coming to the front. The rejection of the scheme by the Universities of Queen's and Trinity has narrowed the question to that of confederation between Victoria and the University of Toronto. At a meeting of the Board of Regents of Victoria University, held in Elm Street Methodist Church, Toronto, on Friday, May 21st, communications were read from the Attorney-General of Ontario, and from the Minister of Education, expressing the readiness of the Government to go forward with the proposed federation, if Victoria would fall in with the scheme. The official action of the Methodist Church cannot be taken before the meeting of the General Conference this autumn. Meanwhile, the noise of battle is again beginning to be heard along the line, and no doubt, before many weeks the whole question will come under renewed discussion in the newspapers. We sincerely hope that the authorities of Victoria will see their way to join with the University of Toronto. One warning must, however, be plainly given. The maximum of concession has already been made on behalf of the Provincial University, and the Convocation of that institution has expressed itself as strongly opposed to any considerable departure from the scheme of confederation as agreed upon in Conference. The Methodists have everything to gain from confederation, and many are beginning to question whether the University of Toronto has much to gain from it, in the modified form that is now possible. Certainly every reasonable concession has been made by that institution, and very little more in that direction need be expected.—*Evangelical Churchman.*

WHATEVER may be our individual views or prejudices in relation to the use and abuse of alcoholic liquors, the process of their manufacture is a very interesting chemical operation. Proof-spirit is defined by the United States internal revenue laws to be that mixture of alcohol and water which contains one-half of its volume of absolute alcohol and 53.71 parts of water. When the alcohol and water are mixed together—while combining—contraction of volume takes place to the extent

of 3.71 parts, resulting in 100 parts of proof-spirit. The law declares that the duties on all spirits shall be levied according to their equivalent in proof-spirits. The hydrometers adopted by the Government for the purpose of testing the degrees of strength are graded and marked (0°) for water, (100°) for proof spirit, and (200°) for absolute alcohol, at a standard temperature of 60° Fahr. Alcoholic liquors can be made from any substance that contains saccharine matter already formed by nature, or from any substance that contains the constituent elements that can be converted by some artificial process into the saccharine principle. In the United States they are generally produced from corn, rye, wheat, barley, rice, molasses, apples, grapes and peaches; sometimes from potatoes and beets. Vinous fermentation converts sugar, glucose or saccharine matter into alcohol and carbonic acid gas; the latter passing off into the atmosphere. In order to bring about vinous or alcoholic fermentation five agents are indispensable, viz., saccharine matter, water, heat, a ferment and atmospheric air. Sugar or saccharine matter in its various forms is the only element from which alcohol can be produced; the others are mere auxiliaries to the decomposition.—*Mr. Joseph Dawson, in Popular Science Monthly.*

A SECOND plan for making competition a public benefit has been that of State ownership of part of the competing lines. It has been tried on a large scale in Belgium and Prussia, and on a smaller scale in most other countries, the United States not excepted. It was thought by the advocates of the system that the government would thus obtain a controlling influence over the railroads with which it came in contact, and be able to regulate their policy by its example. These hopes have been disappointed. The private railroads, under such circumstances, regulate those of the government far more than the government regulates the private railroads. There is no chance to carry out any schemes of far-sighted policy. If the private roads are run to make money, the government roads must be managed with the same end in view. The tax-payers will not let the government lines show a deficit while competing lines pay dividends. No administration would dare to allow such a thing, however important the end to be attained. As a matter of fact the government roads of Belgium and Germany were as ready to give rebates as the private lines with which they came into competition. In Belgium they went so far as to grant special rates to those persons who would agree not to ship by canal under any circumstances. The same thing has been done in New York State; but in Belgium the peculiar thing was that the canals and railroads both belonged to the Government, and yet were fighting one another in this way. The system of partial state ownership was hardly distinguishable in its effects from simple private ownership. This fact has been clearly recognized within the last twelve years. Within this period, Belgium, Prussia and Italy have abandoned the "mixed system." Belgium and Prussia have made state management all but universal; Italy has practically given it up.—*From "The Difficulties of Railroad Regulation," by Arthur T. Hadley, in Popular Science Monthly.*