

Contemporary Thought.

THE effort to promote the study of English in Canadian schools is a very earnest one. The leading educational journals constantly insist upon greater prominence being given it in school and college courses and the EDUCATIONAL WEEKLY notes that the trend of public sentiment is in favor of teaching English and not merely the "facts about English."—*Current*.

THE recent appointment by the Minister of Education of Mr. George Dickson, B.A., of Hamilton, to the principalship of Upper Canada College, vacated by the death of Principal Buchan, will tend to strengthen the opinion pretty general among educationists that the surest method of gaining governmental support is to go "agin the Government." The favors bestowed upon Messrs. Seath, * * and Dickson, look like verifications.—*Ayr Recorder*.

THIS has been felt also in literature; Canadian literarians have been compelled to seek publication in the journals and magazines in the country to the south of us. The cause has been the lack of encouragement at home, and the result, a tardy development of literary production. The literature of Canada is impeded and opposed at almost every point; but we hope the day will soon come when a national, unprejudiced, unsectarian journal will give "a local habitation and a name" to the uncertain, diffuse writing which we now term Canadian literature.—*Kosmos for July*.

It takes a strong effort to be a writer of much interest. So much of deep thinking is born of heart-throbs and actual experience to make it vivid, that rare merit is not often found, save in thoughts that come from the deep fountain of real tenderness. To write funny and flippant sayings one may be careless and off-hand—the more so the better—but to write life thoughts that touch, mold and convince others; that move, persuade, and carry their tingle into the warm blood of the reader, is an art not given to very many, not enjoyed by everyone, save in moments of deep feeling.—*J. W. Donovan, in The Current*.

IN 1866, out of 104 head masterships of high schools sixteen were from Toronto, three from Victoria, five from Queen's, four from Trinity, and seventy-six classed as miscellaneous. In 1885, out of 103, fifty-eight are from Toronto, twenty from Victoria (and Albert), twelve from Queen's, nine from Trinity, four classed as miscellaneous. Should Victoria enter confederation the new university will certainly have an overwhelming influence in the schools.—*Kosmos for July*.

PARENTS have practically abdicated their position as domestic rulers, and leave Young Canada to form its own character. Relieved of the wholesome restraint which formed so valuable a part of early training in former days, being indeed totally undisciplined, thousands of boys finish their education in the streets, an unflinching means of becoming demoralized socially and physically. As the first steps towards amending this unfortunate state of affairs, let parents keep their boys home at nights. Until respect for their elders and better manners are imparted our youth can never be, as it ought to be, the pride of the country.—*The Week*.

POLITICS should have nothing to do with securing a position for a teacher. Too often political influence counts for more than intellectual qualifications. Not always do the best teachers secure the best positions, but those who can do the most for the trustees and directors. No teacher should meddle in politics. He has a right to his own political convictions; he should have decided views upon all national questions, but he should not try to impress these opinions upon the minds of his pupils and patrons.—Teaching is not a political office, and in most cases it is not necessary that the people should know to what political party the teacher may belong. No school officer or teacher should be selected on account of his politics. The evil is not confined to any State or county. A reform is needed. We want no politicians in the schoolroom, but genuine, devoted teachers.—*Normal Index, Virginia*.

BELIEVING that young ladies should be taught to value education for its own sake, and that the prize system diverts the thought and aim from the path of true scholarship to that of pride and selfish ambition, the founders of the College and its present Faculty have unanimously discarded it, and have thus far courteously, yet firmly, refused donations kindly designated for this purpose. The one advantage of the system in exciting laggard spirits to greater activity is acknowledged, yet the exceeding great difficulty in awarding prizes, medals, etc., impartially and according to merit, the burning sense of injustice left in the minds of the many, the injury often done to the student's health in severe mental contests, the cramming necessarily connected with the competitive examinations, and the fostering of pride and folly in the public bestowal of such rewards, ought to suggest to educators the utter abolition of the prize system.—*Announcement of Alma College, 1885-6*.

GRAY will always, we suppose, hold, by virtue rather of earlier claim than of prior right, the first nominal place among our elegiac poets. The "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" is so beautiful and so simple, so entirely devoid of anything that is "caviare to the general," and reflects so perfectly that mood of gentle regret which is neither too gloomy for fascination nor too intense for a quietly imaginative heart, that it has almost stamped him on the national mind as the elegiac poet of our country. But the present writer at least is convinced that neither the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," nor the "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," beautiful as each is, touches so high a point in the elegiac poetry of our country as some half dozen of Matthew Arnold's poems. Just glance over the edition of his poems in three volumes which Messrs. Macmillan have just issued; you will be struck by the fact that all the finest poems in all three, even though professing to be lyric, or dramatic, or narrative, are in their finest passages and happiest thoughts essentially poems of elegy—by which we mean poems of exquisite regret—and not, in fact, poems of longing, or of passion, or of character, or of heroic venture. Even the beautiful early poem on the Church of Brou is essentially elegiac.—*The Spectator*.

IT is much to be desired that a larger number of citizens should record their votes in elections for School Trustees. The trustees spend a large

sum of money. Their duties are very important, and there should be some influence, besides the admonitions of conscience, to compel them to do right. When an election is a mere formality, participated in by a returning officer, a nominator, a seconder and a couple of spectators, the trustee elect naturally concludes that the people whose money he spends are careless about his conduct. He may be a good man, and do his duty faithfully of his own accord. But he may be a schemer, whom it would be in the public interest to have dismissed. Nearly all the electors turn out to vote for Councillors and Aldermen. The School Trustee election comes a week later, and very few voters record their votes. Frequently the elections are by acclamation. To get away from this "dead and alive" state of affairs, it has been proposed that the votes for Councillors and for School Trustees shall be recorded at the same time and place.—*Hamilton Times on Election of School Trustees*.

OUR neighbor, the *Presbyterian Review*, has a curious paragraph on the question of the Bible in the School, in an article on the recent Teachers' Convention. It says: "The convention, on a previous occasion, expressed the opinion that the Bible should be read in all the schools, but the action of the Minister in providing a series of Scripture lessons seems in some quarters to be accepted as a satisfactory compromise. We have already stated that we do not look upon this as a satisfactory solution of the problem, nor can we see how the Presbyterian Church can be content with allowing matters to remain as they are. The nation cannot prosper that deliberately puts aside God's Word and substitutes a compromise—a thing of man's invention. No good has ever come of compromises that make sacrifice of truth and principle, and we do not look for any lasting good from this attempt at yoking together incompatibles." It seems to us that the preparation of Scripture lessons for reading in all the public schools was an important measure that ought to give much gratification to Christian people. There is no compromise in preparing a series of lessons to be used, instead of using the Bible itself. These lessons are the words of Holy Scripture. Only a selection could be read in any case. Is it not better that the lessons should be selected by competent persons than to leave this to the chance whim of teachers? All agitation for such religious instruction as cannot be practically carried out in schools attended by children of all denominations can only injure our whole school system, and tend towards a system of Separate Church Schools. Most of those who talk most loudly about religious instruction in the schools are known to favor church schools. We fail to see how the Scripture lessons which have been sanctioned and partly prepared by representatives of the different churches, can be called "putting aside God's word," or "sacrificing truth and principle." This is not so. There seems to be an animus in the *Review's* remarks which we do not understand. We are strongly in favor of the Bible in the schools, and, therefore, feel gratified at what has been done by the present Minister of Education, in the way of practically carrying out this good idea. We see no "yoking together of incompatibles" in it.—*The Christian Guardian, on Scripture Lessons in Schools*.