Contemporary Thought.

THE curiosity regarding the natural world and its wonders, displayed more intensely in youth than by children of a larger growth, is the best evidence of the desire to learn, and its encouragement is the way to ensure a real mental growth.—*Ex.*

FALSTAFF wittily told the chief justice, when taxed with deafness, that it was the disease of not listening, the malady of not marking, that troubled him withal. The habit of inattention, which is generally chargeable in our day and generation, may be accounted for, though not excused, on the same grounds. The faculty of close observation is now praised as a thing rarely existent; the youth showing signs of inquiring and intelligent attentiveness is held up as a prodigy, and as likely to attain to some eminence in life.—*Ex.*

IT is a striking fact, the sudden turning of so many first-rate minds to the subject of education; and a great revolution in scholastic affairs, however gradual, will certainly result from it. No subject ought to be so universally interesting. If none seem so tedious to us, it may be because our own education was so bad; or that we have reflected so little about it that new suggestions find in our minds no soil to strike root in; or that the complexity and practical difficulties of it paralyze our faculties: in any case, the more reason for spurring ourselves to the study. There is no subject more beset with popular errors, none in which science is more useful, explanatory, and suggestive. Not only every professional educator, but every father and mother (amateur educators!) ought to have some acquaintance with psychology. However absurd this seems, I defend it on the ground that nothing else enables one to interpret the faint and fragmentary recollections of having been one's self a child: without which how can other children be known, and, if unknown, how trained? At school I often used to wonder whether the masters had ever been to school, they knew so little of what we boys were thinking, feeling, and about to do. I have heard an educated woman say of her baby, squalling of course, at six months old, "I believe he knows he's doing wrong." Heautomorphism, in default of science, is ever the first resource of explanation; *i.e.*, we judge of others by ourselves. Discipline without knowledge, and therefore without sympathy, an outside wooden machinery, hampering and crushing, is the same in schools, in homes, and in prisons.—*Carveth Read, in Popular Science Monthly.*

THE educational system of Quebec, in the first place, is divided into three classes of education, the elementary, the secondary, and the superior, in addition, of course, to the special and normal schools. In the elementary education there is, however, a dual constitution corresponding with the dualism of religions and nationalities which exist in the Province. Roughly speaking, three-quarters of the people of Quebec are Roman Catholics, and the balance Protestants. The schools of both sections alike receive the support of the State, and, indeed, it is essential that some kind of religious teaching shall form part of the instruction in each school receiving State support. Thus, if the inhabitants of any district are mainly Roman Catholics, the school will be Roman Catholic in its religious teaching, and if Protestants, Protestant. As to the religious minority in any school, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, it is optional for the children of parents opposed to the religion taught either to remain or withdraw during religious exercises. By this arrangement full and entire liberty is secured, and perfect harmony maintained. The Hon. Gédéon Ouimet, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, is at the head of both the Roman Catholic and Protestant schools, and any visitor to the Court during the course of the Exhibition will have found him as ready to speak on behalf of the one section as the other. "We have not," said Mr. Ouimet, not long since, "advice, still less lessons, to give the foreigner, but we may be allowed to congratulate ourselves upon having learnt to apply so advantageously to ourselves the great principle of liberty in education." And this is one of the features in the Quebec system that will most impress the inquirer. —*Canadian Gazette.*

IN outlining Pestalozzi's thought, I note the following points as perhaps best expressing his method:—Education must be determined by the nature of that which is educated. Man is a law unto himself. What he is dictates the mode in which he shall be trained. Man's powers are not the result of accident—they are his own interior, original possessions. They came with him. Education, therefore, which does not base itself upon a right understanding of these integral human powers, and of the nature which they express, is not education—has no right to the name or the claim. Pestalozzi, by stating this truth, and by forcing it, as it were, into the world's consciousness, deserves lasting praise. Here is the first step toward a scientific treatment of education; it is not, in itself, such treatment, does not even prove such treatment possible—it is the point of beginning, the corrective, the safeguard. This truth is fundamental in Pestalozzi's thought. It found expression in "The Evening Hours of a Hermit," and is repeated in every subsequent writing. "Universal upbuilding of the inner powers of human nature is the universal aim of culture." Pestalozzi's system, therefore, when self-consistent, rests upon his interpretation of human nature. Our reformer believed man to have a threefold being. He was body, mind, and conscience. It is a vital part of Pestalozzi's thought that man's welfare depends upon a good and truth-obeying heart. Here is place for the religious element, and we find Pestalozzi speaking as follows: "Belief in God is the source of peace, peace is the source of inward order; inward order the source of undisturbed application of our powers, and this order becomes, in turn, the source of their growth and development to wisdom. Wisdom is the source of all blessing." We have thus far two essential factors in Pestalozzi's thought: education is determined by the nature of the educated—man is threefold, body, mind, and heart. Proceeding a step further we inquire, What precisely is it that this threefold being requires? Do body, mind, and conscience unite in demanding for their education a single method? Pestalozzi answers yes, and affirms that the common, universal law, is *development.* To-day we theoretically recognize this law, and admit its vital import in all educational endeavour; practically we too often ignore it, and proceed after the old and evil fashion of preparing the mind for market as the animal is prepared for sale.—*From "Some Outlines from the History of Education," by Professor W. R. Benedict, in Popular Science Monthly.*

A LITERARY fracas, which reminds us of a more barbarous age, has been brought on by an article in the *Quarterly* on the teaching of English Literature in the Universities. The article, though general in its title, is really an attack on Mr. Gosse, a Professor of Literature at the University of Cambridge, for some blunders of which he is alleged to have been guilty in a course of lectures delivered before the Lowell Institute at Boston and published under the title, "From Shakespeare to Pope." It seems that Mr. Churton Collins, who avows the authorship of the review, was an unsuccessful candidate for the chair corresponding to that of Mr. Gosse at Oxford. Hence perhaps his eagerness to envelop both the universities in his censures, though only one of them at most is concerned. The savage character both of the original attack and of Mr. Collins's rejoinder in the *Athenæum* to Mr. Gosse's defence of himself, constitutes in the eyes of all right-minded men an offence graver than any literary error; and it is only made more unpleasant by the affectation of a stern and lofty sense of literary duty. Both attack and rejoinder display not only the angry temper of a literary martinet, but a settled desire to ruin Mr. Gosse's reputation; they are not merely peppery but deliberately inhuman. It seems, too, that the two men were old friends. The most serious of the charges against Mr. Gosse is that he has taken Sidney's "Arcadia" and Harrington's "Oceana" for poems, the "Oceana" being, as as all the world knows, a prose treatise on politics, and the "Arcadia" being also mainly in prose. But this he denies; and though his language is certainly open to misconstruction, as it is on some other points also, it would be difficult to believe that a man who has undeniably made English literature his study could fall into errors so gross. Of some minor slips, such as saying that Oldham died in 1684, whereas he died in the previous year, Mr. Gosse has certainly been guilty. Accuracy is desirable, especially in a professorial chair. But little slips, paradoxical as the statement may seem, sometimes proceed not from ignorance, but from familiarity with the subject. On a subject with which a writer feels thoroughly familiar he is apt to trust his memory, which will now and then fail him. On a subject with which he is not familiar he takes care to work with his books of reference round him. It is not difficult to find slips in Milman, who was unquestionably master of his subject, though it might be difficult to find any in Freeman. It is unlucky for the reputation of English scholarship that lectures in which any inaccuracies can be found should have been delivered by an English professor before a Boston audience. Mr. Swinburne, whose name Mr. Collins dragged into the controversy, has written a letter in which he convicts Mr. Collins himself of a blunder grosser than any of which Mr. Gosse is accused—attributing the "Agamemnon" and the "Persæ" to Sophocles instead of Æskylus.—*The Week.*