

Contemporary Thought.

INSTRUCTION in sewing, in ornamental needle-work, in modelling in clay, and in various of the simpler branches of industrial art, might also be given to the girls of our schools, with equal advantage to their minds and their morals.—*Christian Union*.

THE system of payment by results, in its application to schools, is such as to render the lives of their teachers one long-continued burden, with a terrible loss to the higher educational results, without one redeeming feature to commend itself to those who are outside the official ring.—*School-master, London, Eng.*

IN reference to the holiday question, if teachers were wise they would not show such an irrepresible anxiety to secure every possible holiday. The board is not exceedingly hard-hearted, and it might see its way clear to granting a prolonged leave of absence to teachers whose thirst for holidays cannot be slaked by the very liberal provisions laid down by statute.—*Peterborough Examiner*.

A HEALTHY tendency has been developed of late to push those branches of education which familiarize the student with nature, though as yet it cannot be said that so much attention has been paid to these branches as they deserve. The difference which even a very modest acquaintance with geology and botany makes in the interest of everyday life is so considerable that a very brief experience ought to demonstrate the importance of education in this direction.—*New York Tribune*.

THERE was a time when each school district in Ohio had a valuable library, furnished by the State, and many of the sub-districts even had maps, globes, and other apparatus; but there were too many teachers who could keep school without such appliances. The boys played football with the globes, and the volumes of the library were scattered and lost. And this reckless waste has had its counterpart in nearly everything else pertaining to the management of our country schools—waste of money, waste of time, and waste of effort, without aim or plan.—*Ohio Educational Monthly*.

SIR LYON PLAYFAIR at the recent British Association meeting strongly complained of the neglect of scientific studies and modern languages in public schools, and with reason. At the Oxford and Cambridge certificate examinations of last summer, 703 boys passed in Latin and 673 in Greek, but only 131 in any and all the branches of science. There were only 263 proficient in French and 94 in German, while, most deplorable of all, the number of those who passed in English did not rise above 113. It may be inferred, then, that more than six times as much attention had been paid to Latin as to English, and that all the sciences had been esteemed of less than one fifth the value of Greek!—*New York Tribune*.

IT is stated that ex-Premier Gladstone contemplates turning his attention to theological studies on his retirement from public life—in this respect following the example of Sir William Jones, Sir Isaac Newton, Lord Bacon, and John Milton. Voltaire declared that Newton's theo-

logical study was a sign of weakness; the contrary should be considered the truth. The wonder is not that great men after escaping from the turmoil and contentions of this world should turn their minds to the contemplation of the world beyond: the wonder is, that they do not do so sooner, instead of exhausting their vital powers in the pursuit of the phantom fortune, and devoting only their few last hours to the concerns of a life eternal in its duration. The signs of weakness are just the reverse of Voltaire's statement.—*The University, Chicago*.

"ABBREVIATED LONGHAND," by Wallace Ritchie, is a pamphlet explaining a new system which we should think might prove very useful. It is not claimed that it can vie in value with the more complicated shorthand for swiftness in application, and it is acknowledged that it is not brief enough for *verbatim* reporting; but its advantages lie in the extremely small amount of study and practice required for thorough mastery of it, and the fact that it could be successfully adopted in very many cases instead of the ordinary long-hand, as any compositor, almost without study, could easily read the abbreviated writing. The general plan is to use, instead of the bewildering lines, curves and dots of shorthand, the ordinary manuscript letters of the alphabet, writing, however, only the letters which are prominently sounded. A single sentence will illustrate; instead of "A fox, very hungry, chanced to come into a vineyard," the new system would only require "a fx, vri ungr, chnsd t km nto a vnyrd."—*The Critic*.

THERE are very many men in Pennsylvania who have never planted a tree. This is largely due to the fact that their attention in boyhood was not directed to the matter. Of themselves they never thought of such a thing—no one ever suggested it as a proper thing for them to do—and the habit of not doing became hopelessly chronic! Let the schools change all this. Thousands of schools in the State, both in city and country, could make such provision for securing trees that each pupil would plant a fruit tree or shade tree at his or her own home, or on the grounds of a friend or neighbor. A large school of our acquaintance has done the work in this way: The principal consulted a nurseryman, and learned that he could get choice varieties of peach trees at thirteen cents each. He then called for a contribution of twenty-five cents each from such as could conveniently make it—those who could not contribute were not urged to do so. Everybody will have his tree for Arbor Day, and each tree will probably mean many another in the time to come.—*Pennsylvania School Journal*.

IT is within the power of the professors of University College to perform a gracious and beneficial service to the Province other than the duty which is discharged in their college lecture-rooms. They might become the apostles and missionaries of culture and the higher intellectual life to the people. During the winter months they might occasionally visit the towns and larger villages of our Province and deliver well-prepared addresses there on intellectual topics in the public halls. The benefits which might result from such a course are inestimable. The intellectual level of the whole body of their listeners would be elevated.

Indirectly the strongest possible influence would be brought to bear in favor of university education, and the increased growth of such a sentiment means increased attendance and life and progress at our colleges. But the benign influences would not fall alone upon the people. A share would come to the professors. Their intellectual horizon would be widened and their sympathies deepened by such a course. In some cases race prejudices might be eliminated. Altogether then the outcome of such a movement could only be good, and we should much like to see it in some measure adopted.—*The Varsity*.

HARVARD enters this fall on the 250th year of its existence. The college begins its work equipped with the best strength that during the last ten years has caused its unprecedented growth in scholarship and liberal spirit. A number of young men have also been added to the veteran ranks of instructors. The most noteworthy addition to this year's list is the name of James Russell Lowell. So Harvard is after all to retain this one of her most illustrious sons. Evidently his attachment to his Alma Mater has not waned since the time when Cambridge and Cambridge men were topics in which his pen delighted. But that is more than twenty years ago, and yet the interval of time, the universal admiration of his literary genius, and the praise of nations for his political services, have caused no difference. His return to Harvard is certainly a fact worthy of congratulation, especially in face of the inducements held out to him by the more renowned English university. In his capacity as professor of Belles Lettres he will conduct two courses. One will be chiefly a study of Cervantes, the other will be devoted to Dante. The Spanish course is already associated with the name of Henry W. Longfellow and the Italian with that of Charles Eliot Norton. The present incumbent has certainly not undertaken a task in any way unworthy of his recent exalted rank.—*The Commercial Advertiser*.

THE EDUCATIONAL WEEKLY, one of our most valuable exchanges, had, in a recent issue, a suggestive article on "University College—Its Intellectual Life." The writer showed that the intellectual activity of University College was due entirely to the students themselves, who were not under any obligations to the faculty, council, or senate for any real encouragement in their literary and scientific enterprises. That this is a just statement is only too evident. That the success which has attended the various independent undertakings of our undergraduates is due altogether to their own efforts is a source of pride and gratification to them. But this does not relieve the council of the blame—to use no stronger word—which must attach to it in consequence of its inactivity and lack of practical interest in the highest welfare of the students. The general rule seems to be that no professor thinks it worth while to do anything outside that special work for which he is engaged. True, there are one or two exceptions, but the spirit of enterprise and progress—at least so far as outward manifestation is concerned—does not pervade the professorial staff of University College. What work is required of them is done, and done as well as at any other college, but beyond that—nothing, at least so far as helping to stimulate the progress of literary culture and scientific research amongst the students.—*The Varsity*.