Contemporary Thought.

THE best preliminary preparation for even the studies of a specialist is a liberal education. Such an education connects him with the wide circle of thought and knowledge, and saves him from narrowness and hobbies. The man who can do one thing best is usually a man who could have done other things well.—*Prest. Bartlett (Dartmouth Coll.) in "The Forum."*

VALUABLE as are good buildings, comfortable rooms, neat furniture, and other appurtenances, after all the teacher is the soul and life of the school. It is his spirit that gives life and inspiration to the pupils. The mental growth and, to a large degree, the future character of the children are in his keeping. Such being the character of the case, how very important that the most scrupulous care should be exercised in the appointment of men and women to these responsible positions.—*Supt. W. H. Baker, Savannah, Georgia.*

I AM more and more convinced that while oral and object-teaching can be used to advantage in interesting and instructing many classes, yet there are certain things, like the tables in arithmetic, certain dates and events in history around which cluster all the rest, and certain subjects and topics in geography and grammar that must be thoroughly learned, committed to memory, drilled into the mind so they can never be forgotten, in order to have sure, quick, and accurate scholars, and to make the school education practical for after-life. —*Mr. L. L. Camp, Dwight School, New Haven, Connecticut.*

HOUSEWORK is the most honourable of avocations. What could be more desirable than to have a nice house without paying rent, food provided without our care, and wages in addition, with all the comforts and privileges which a good Christian woman can give a housemaid? We should like to see . . . the girls that now flock to city shops and stores taking positions in families as laundry women, cooks and waiting and nursery maids. How much more free and independent they would be! How much better protected, and less exposed to physical and moral dangers.—*Advocate and Guardian.*

THOUGH it speaks little for modern civilization, the masses of the people are wont to esteem the savage as preternaturally wise in the secrets of Nature, more especially in the prevention and elimination of disease, accrediting him with knowledge botanical, pharmacal, and therapeutical, that if possessed of but a shadow of reality would be little less than divine. In this we have interesting evidence of man's tendency to reversion, and of lingering attributes of the final state of his awe in the presence of the occult, and inherent worship of the unknown; for how frequently one encounters, in all ranks and classes of society, individuals who, in spite of refined teachings and surroundings, exhibit an unmistakable taste for charlatanism in some of its many forms, secular and spiritual!—*Popular Science Monthly for September.*

EDUCATION has an internal and external aspect. Considered as to its essential nature, education is human development. Man comes into the world endowed with certain physical and mental capacities. These are at first in a germinal or undeveloped condition; but they contain within themselves large possibilities and a strong impulse towards development. The object of education is to lead the several parts of a man's nature to a harmonious realization of their highest possibilities. The finished result is a complete manhood, the chief elements of which are a healthy body, a clear and well-informed intellect, sensibilities quickly susceptible to every right feeling, and a steady will, whose volitions are controlled by reason and an enlightened conscience.—*Prof. F. V. Painter, of Roanoke College, Va.*

A CHINESE newspaper gives an interesting description of the system adopted in the education of a Mancho prince of the blood royal. Rising at about three o'clock in the morning, the imperial pupil is first given a lesson in Chinese literature to learn. If he does not accomplish his task properly, his tutor requests a eunuch to bring the ferrule. The prince is not punished himself, but one of the eight fellow-students who always accompany him is flogged instead—a sort of vicarious chastisement. If he is very bad indeed, he is taken to the Emperor, who directs a eunuch to pinch his cheeks. The whole of the prince's day is taken up with mental and physical exercises. At suitable intervals his meals are weighed out for him. When he is fifteen years old he must marry. One year before a wife is selected for the heir apparent he is provided with a handmaid, who prepares him for a husband's duties. No one but the empress is allowed to pass the night with the emperor. The emperor sleeps with eight handmaids sitting upon his bed and sixteen others underneath the bed. Their function is to keep watch over his majesty, and they are not allowed to sneeze, cough or utter any sound.

THERE are at least three kinds of education—that of the home, of the school, and of the street, presided over respectively by the parent, the teacher, and the loafer. The last is too often the most potential; the first can and ought to be; while the second is belittled because often the parent does not see that the teacher has a fair chance in the fight. I cannot charge anything but indifference upon parents in general; but this charge is sufficiently grave, for it is quite true, as the ancients believed, that against the indifference of the people the gods themselves battle in vain. When the father will, he can be a splendid teacher for his child; when the mother will, she can make the sewing room or the kitchen eloquent with those memories of lessons learned, and of problems tried, which every scholar knows all about and keeps as his dearest treasure; when father and mother both will, they can uphold the hands of the teacher, and the three, working together, will make an irresistible power to leave the world better and purer after they have dropped out of the struggle.—*Pennsylvania School Journal.*

THE great intellectual issue of the present day, however some may try to disguise it, is that between dogma on the one hand and the free spirit of scientific inquiry on the other. In using the word dogma, we have no wish to employ the argument *ad invidiam*—to take advantage, that is to say, of the popular prejudice no doubt attaching to recognized *dogmatism*. No, we frankly confess at the outset that a man may argue for dogma without betraying any dogmatic spirit, and that there would therefore be no fairness in embracing dogma and dogmatism in a common condemnation. None the less do we maintain that dogma is opposed to the free scientific spirit; and that the world is now being summoned to decide which of the two it will take for its guide. A definition of dogma, as we understand it, is therefore in order. By dogma we mean a traditional opinion held and defended on account of its assumed practical value, rather than on account of its truth—an opinion that is felt to require defending; that, like our "infant industries," needs protection; and round which its supporters rally accordingly. When great and special efforts are being made to place and keep a certain opinion on its legs, so to speak, be sure that it is a dogma that is concerned, and not any product of the free intellectual activity of mankind.—*From "Ex-President Porter on Evolution," by W. D. Le Sueur, in Popular Science Monthly for September.*

PRESIDENT STILES, of Yale College, in his Election Sermon of May 8, 1783, before the General Assembly of Connecticut, portrayed the future glories of the United States in terms almost prophetic. The arts, the arms, the commerce, the literature of the new nation in the coming decades are dwelt upon by the venerable doctor with an enthusiasm which would be considered now-a-days rather more appropriate in a freshman's first forensic effort. One of the richest of his themes is the inevitable growth of population, and he dilates upon it as if the complete census report of 1880 had been unrolled before his enraptured vision. "Our degree of population is such as to give us reason to expect that this will become a great people. It is probable that within a century from our independence the sun will shine on fifty millions of inhabitants in the United States. This will be a great, a very great nation, nearly equal to half Europe . . . so that before the millennium the English settlements in America may become more numerous millions than that greatest dominion on earth, the Chinese Empire." Not once, throughout his long vaticination, does it seem to have occurred to Dr. Stiles that his descendants might find some drawbacks to this happy enumeration of fifty millions, or that the Americans of 1886, looking at the successive census reports with their steady decennial leaps of one-third, might be provoked only to murmur plaintively, "How long?" To him fifty millions meant power, wealth, resources, ten millions of fighting men, universal respect abroad, with only that vague sense of "responsibility" which should prevent the possessor of a giant's strength from using it like a giant. To us it means the exaggeration of contrasts of wealth, the exasperation of those who would have considered themselves examples of comfort fifty years ago, a proletariat not grown out of proportion, but armed for evil with weapons which can do more mischief in an hour than can be repaired in a year; and, to the gloomy among us, the prospects for the future are only of a time when the country shall be "like a Stilton cheese, run away with by its own mites." Time has brought us respect abroad; but with it, and a part of it, has come a growing danger from within—the increasing size of the residuum which prefers lawlessness to law.—*The Century for October.*