

CURRENT THOUGHT.

The great need of our people is the diffusion of more educated men and women among the rank and file of our people. We are too far below the possible realization of Christian civilization. We have not yet, in Christian society, the application of Gospel principles to the life of the nation. No human power is to have more influence in securing this better life than that of woman. Mothers should see that their daughters are educated in view of the privileges provided for young men.—*Dr. A. W. Sawyer, Pres. of Acadia College.*

One of the most important studies for all persons is that of written language, for language is the medium by which knowledge is communicated and preserved. Language in the hands of one who uses it with precision and accuracy, is the means of instructing, convincing, and persuading; its misapplication on the other hand, often leads to confusion in our ideas and to many of the gravest errors in the science of morals, legislation and other kindred subjects. Of the importance of accurate and precise language in the matter of legislation, the following illustration will, I think, be deemed conclusive. The late Hon. Caleb Cushing, of Massachusetts, spent the larger part of his mature life as a member of legislative bodies. For years he was the mentor of the Massachusetts Legislature, at a time when his politics put him always in a minority on any political measure. Yet he saved the State from much unconstitutional legislation by his power of command over the English language. It has been said that no suit at law is known to have been brought into court by any lawyer, in which the success of the suit depended on proving to be unconstitutional or defective, any statute of which Caleb Cushing had the control in the committee which framed it. He was able to say, and to assist legislators to say, so exactly what was meant, that no clear-headed advocate could misunderstand the statute, or find a flaw in it by which to sustain a lawsuit. The explanation of that power of his of precise utterance, as given by those who knew him best, is, that he read and conversed in a half a dozen languages, and made language the study of his life.—*Prof. Bridges, U. N. B.*

CURRENT NOTES.

While the movement for the higher education of women is making rapid progress in America and in several European countries it has met with a decided reverse in Prussia. The Minister of Education there has decided that in future women are not to be admitted either as students or even to attend the lectures of the Prussian universities. The reasons for this backward step have not been announced.

Of desultory reading, Mr. Frederic Harrison wisely says:—"A habit of reading idly debilitates and corrupts the mind for all wholesome reading, the habit of reading wisely is one of the most difficult habits to acquire, needing strong resolution and infinite pains; and reading for mere reading's sake, instead of the good we gain from reading, is one of the worst and commonest and most unwholesome habits we have."

Truly this is an age of discovery. The Christian Philosophical Institute, of London, has just published a pamphlet to show that the Romish Cardinals in 1610, were "scripturally, philosophically and practically right," that Galileo was "absolutely and probably"—that is good—"in the wrong;" and that if the earth moves "the Almighty Creator was totally ignorant of the fact," and man with his ingenuity has never been able to prove it."

A CONSERVATIVE GROWL.—If all the suggestions about popular education are adopted, the daily curriculum of the public school will be about as follows. One hour sewing, one hour washing and ironing, one hour cooking, one hour table-setting and other branches of housekeeping, one hour music, one hour dancing, one hour painting, one hour modeling and sculpture, one hour reading, one hour writing, one hour arithmetic, one hour book-keeping, one hour industrial education, one hour civil government, one hour each on geography, algebra, trigonometry, Latin, German Greek, botany, astronomy, tariff and free trade, farming and the weather. If the scholar of 1800 has any time to spare, probably some enthusiast will suggest the study of electricity, aerial navigation, and the nebular hypothesis. Don't crowd the children.—*Norwich (Conn.) Bulletin.*

WRONG IDEAS OF EDUCATION.—We are in the habit of pointing to popular education as a panacea for the ills of human society. This is well enough, provided we have the right kind of education to point at. In this respect we should not be blind to the fact that the aversion to manual labor among our young people has grown up under the very system of popular education we now have. The impression is spreading among them that education is to teach them, mainly, how to get along in life, and, if possible, how to get rich without hard work. How many boys without means are there who, having learned to write a good hand, think it beneath them to make a living in any other way than with their pens, or, having learned to add up sums and to calculate interest, would think themselves degraded if they did any rougher work than mark pieces on goods or keep books, and, doing this, wear nice clothes and keep their hands white? And thus it is that the young men, shunning farm and workshop, crowd the cities and haunt stores and counting rooms for employment in constantly increasing numbers; while it is a notorious fact that the American people, and people born and raised upon American soil, turn out so small a proportion of artisans and manual laborers generally that we have to look in a large measure to foreign immigration to supply that want of society.—*Carl Schurz.*

VALUE OF ENGLISH CLASSICS.—As combining mental discipline with the commonest utility, the study of the English language and literature is unsurpassed. It is not necessary that the average American girl be a linguist in Latin, or Greek, or French, or German, or Spanish, or Italian, or profoundly versed in any of these literatures; but it is necessary that she be able to write and speak her own language with correctness and fluency, and that she be not ignorant of those literary productions of which the English-speaking world is proud. There is in the great English masterpieces an educating power, of which teachers in general have little conception. Merely to be able to read the best passages aloud, with just appreciation and appropriate vocal expression, is no insignificant attainment; yet it should be insisted upon as an essential prerequisite to a diploma. And why should not these great works be made the foundation and the material for linguistic and rhetorical study, as the masterpieces of Greek writers have been from time immemorial? Form and style aside,—and perhaps we ought not to accept these,—is there any thing in *Æschylus* or *Sophocles* richer than in *Shakespeare*; anything in *Homer* grander than in *Milton*; anything in *Demosthenes* nobler than in *Chatham*, *Burke*, or *Webster*? anything in *Plato* superior in moral beauty to the utterances of *Moses*, or *David*, or *Job*, or *Solomon*, or *Isaiah*? Why, a thorough understanding of the three great English classics,—the Bible, *Shakespeare*, and *Milton*,—would be better than the entire education given in nine-tenths of the so-called colleges. A systematic and progressive study of the English language and literature through four years seems to me one of the most desirable features in any institution for the superior instruction of American women.—*Honor B. Sprague.*

A SOLUTION OF THE TEXT-BOOK QUESTIONS.—I do not hesitate to say that in judgment we shall, sooner or later, find the remedy for text-book evils in free text-books. A common-school education is well nigh free to the children of this state, but not wholly free. While our constitution guarantees a common-school education to every boy and girl, it is nevertheless conditioned upon his ability to buy the necessary books; he is furnished, free of charge, a comfortable house, a comfortable seat, a competent teacher, ink, pens, crayons, and other accessories of school work; but he must buy his own book or be barred from school privileges. This he is required to do at a cost almost three times as great as it would cost the school district to buy it for him.—*State Sept. Accrs., Iowa.*

PERSONAL.

Inspector Carter is visiting the Schools in Charlotte County.

Mr. A. C. A. Daine, of Barrington, inspector of schools for Yarmouth and Shelburne districts, died at Boston.

Mr. John Britton, the energetic teacher and botanist of Petticoatic, discovered seven species of flowering plants, new to the Province, on the St. John River during the past summer—a well spent vacation.

Mr. W. D. Rankin, who had the degree of B. A. conferred on him at the N. B. University last June, expects to leave here during this coming month for Edinburgh, Scotland, where he enters a medical college for the pursuit of studies connected with his intended profession. Mr. Z. Nason is shortly to give up school here, for the purpose of entering the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Baltimore, Md.—*Woodstock Sentinel.*

In conferring the degree of D. C. L. George Stewart, jr., of the Quebec *Chronicle*, King's College, Windsor, has taken the lead, says the Montreal *Gazette*, among our seats of learning, in honouring literature for its own sake. McGill College has already, it is true, made M. Fréchette a Doctor of Laws, a graceful compliment from Anglo-Canadian culture to French-Canadian genius. But Dr. Stewart is the first Anglo-Canadian *literateur* whose worth has been recognized by an Anglo-Canadian university.

QUESTION DEPARTMENT.

Knowing well that a large number of teachers through the country can not reach all the books that are necessary as references, the JOURNAL will contain a column devoted to the answering of questions. It is desirable that the questions be stated particularly and written legibly to avoid any mistakes occurring in the answers. The questions should be confined to school work and not to general subjects, as this paper is to be purely a school journal. In opening this column it is necessary to have the hearty co-operation of teachers to make it a success. Any question on theory will be answered in the editorial columns. All questions will be answered as promptly as they can be, but we do not bind ourselves to answer in the next issue after receipt of question. The same privilege is extended to subscribers other than teachers. All communications should be addressed "QUESTION DEPARTMENT," JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, St. John, N. B.

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