

Contemporary Thought.

THE historian of Cyrus the Elder says of him, by way of compliment, that "he knew how to govern and how to be governed." Both of these qualifications are necessary to the successful teacher, and in being governed to know how to be self-governed. The teacher who governs himself will successfully govern others. Not only those who give directions in scholastic pursuits in the school-room but all who "cause others to know," are teachers and educators.—*G. H. Laughlin, in The Current.*

CHILDREN at first learn to sing entirely by imitation. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that the pattern should be good. Observe the following rules: 1. *Never sing with the pupils.* Let them listen quietly to your pattern, and imitate. (In cases where the teacher cannot sing at all, a few of the more musical of the children may be called upon to sing the pattern.) 2. Let the pattern be short enough to be easily remembered. 3. The pattern must be *soft and distinct.* 4. Repeat the pattern until you get a soft, clear response from the class.—*Daniel Batchelor.*

I DENY that the utilitarian view of primary education is ignoble. The present system is truly ignoble, for it sends the working-man into the world in gross ignorance of everything he is to do in it. The utilitarian system is noble, in so far as it treats him as an intelligent being, who ought to understand the nature of his occupation and the principles involved in it. The great advantage of directing education towards the pursuits and occupations of the people, instead of wasting it on dismal verbalism, is that, while it elevates the individual it at the same time gives security for the future prosperity of the nation.—*From "Sketch of Sir Lyon Playfair," in Popular Science Monthly.*

SOME of the evils of irregular attendance at school are: 1. An hour lost is lost forever; present duties crowd the present, the past cannot be recalled. 2. One lesson depends on another; every missed lesson weakens the foundation on which others rest. 3. Irregularity in boys becomes the same in men; bad habits stay. 4. The teacher's explanations are invaluable; he has no time to spare for needless repetitions. 5. The presence of the irregular attender checks the progress of the class and the enthusiasm of both class and teacher. 6. The one day out by a pupil is lost; he does not know next day's lessons and consequently loses nearly two days by one day's absence. 7. Irregularity causes a pupil to lose interest; the teacher is not much interested in those who feel no interest.—*London Advertiser.*

AT last the Senate of Toronto University has adopted a scheme providing for local examinations. These may be held wherever there are not less than five students desirous of taking any one or more of the subjects for matriculation. The fee is \$2; an additional \$5 is charged for registration as an undergraduate of the university. Every teacher ought to know all about this scheme and set about taking advantage of it. If we are not mistaken the boon now conferred on the student and teacher is a product of, or at least has been

hastened by, the light thrown on university questions by the discussions on confederation. The adoption and further carrying out of this liberal policy will do much towards making Toronto University truly the university of the Province.—*London Advertiser.*

WITH children attention is the key to success. The teacher who can secure and hold the attention of children ought to make elementary teaching his life-work. With older students, such as college students and those in the technical schools, the ability to fasten the attention upon a given subject, and to keep it there, is the *sine qua non* of success. Newton once said: "The difference between myself and other men consists chiefly in the habit I have acquired of more completely concentrating my attention, and holding it longer upon a subject, than most men. Because I have acquired the power of intense and prolonged attention I am able to accomplish what others fail to do." To inspire and direct, and to be the guiding architect in building up a noble character, is the work, the privilege, and the pleasure of the teacher.—*G. H. Laughlin, in The Current.*

It is impossible to over-rate the influence of real tunes in developing the musical faculty of the child; and, as this development is to go on, even after the sight-singing course is begun, we receive here a hint as to the nature of the technical exercises to be employed while we teach music-reading. These also should be tuneful and natural both in melodic flow and rhythmic form. It need not disturb us if we find the children "catching" them easily; if there is anything in an exercise which appeals to the musical nature of the child he cannot help remembering it. To confine children to studies full of awkward, unmelodious tone arrangements, of limping and unsymmetrical time, rests in the most unexpected places, with no regular close but a sudden "pull-up," may hold them to a sort of dry attention for the time being. But such exercises, which nobody can remember, and which no musical person would ever try to remember, leave no valuable impression on the child's mind. They cannot be highly regarded as means of culture; for the teacher can never afford to substitute a meretricious skill in deciphering musical characters for a true musical growth.—*School Music Journal.*

THE purpose of the college is to do for the mind and character what the gymnasium does for the physical powers; to build up the man all round. If the student "hates mathematics," it is probably because his mind is naturally weak on the side of abstract reasoning, and the hated study is therefore the very study he needs. If he has a lofty disdain of literature, it is very likely only an evidence of some lack of that side of culture somewhere in his ancestry. There is nothing sacred about a "bent." So far from being an indication of Providence, it is apt to be a mere indication of hereditary defect. If we look at it from the side of its being a predisposition to weakness in some particular directions, a bent away from certain lines of study (the form in which it chiefly shows itself in college), we can see that the sooner it is repaired by a generous mental diet, the better for the man and for the race to whose ideal perfection he and his posterity are to contribute. Per-

haps the greatest danger to which the higher education is at present exposed is that of spreading before the student a vast number of miscellaneous subjects, all recommended as equally valuable, and inviting him to choose according to his bent. The result naturally is that the average boy follows that universal bent of human nature toward the course that offers him the easiest time. If this course happens to include strong studies, easy only because he is specially interested in them, the harm is not so great; but if it consists chiefly of light studies, introduced into the curriculum only because somebody was there to teach them, and somebody else wanted them taught (and perhaps a little, too, because each counts one in a catalogue), then the harm is enormous.—*E. R. Sill, in the Atlantic Monthly.*

It takes half my time to read the "poems" sent me by young people of both sexes. They would be more shy of doing it if they knew that I recognize a tendency to rhyming as a common form of mental weakness, and the publication of a thin volume of verse as *prima facie* evidence of ambitious mediocrity, if not inferiority. Of course there are exceptions to this rule of judgment, but I maintain that the presumption is always against the rhymester as compared with the less pretentious persons about him or her, busy with some useful calling—too busy to be tagging rhymed commonplaces together. Just now there seems to be an epidemic of rhyming as bad as the dancing mania, or the sweating sickness. After reading a certain amount of manuscript verse one is disposed to anathematize the inventor of homophonous syllabification. This, that is, rhyming, must have been found out very early—

"Where are you, Adam?"
"Here am I, Madam";

but it can never have been habitually practised until after the Fall. The intrusion of tintinnabulating terminations into the conversational intercourse of men and angels would have spoiled Paradise itself. Milton would not have them even in "Paradise Lost," you remember. For my own part, I wish certain rhymes could be declared contraband of written or printed language. We have rhyming dictionaries—let us have one from which all rhymes are rigorously excluded. The sight of a poor creature grubbing for rhymes to fill up his sonnet, or to cram one of those voracious, rhyme-swallowing rigmatoles which some of our drudging poetical operatives have been exhausting themselves of late to satiate with jingles, makes my head ache and my stomach rebel. Work, work of some kind, is the business of men and women, not the making of jingles! No—no—no! I want to see the young people in our schools and academics and colleges, and the graduates of these institutions, lifted up out of the little Dismal Swamp of self-contemplating and self-indulging and self-commiserating emotionalism which is surfeiting the land with those literary sandwiches—thin slices of tinkling sentimentality between two covers looking like hard-baked gilt gingerbread. But what faces these young folks make at my good advice! They get tipsy on their rhymes. Nothing intoxicates one like his—or her—own verses, and they hold on to their metre-balladmongering as the fellows that inhale nitrous oxide hold on to the gas-bag.—*O. W. Holmes' New Portfolio, in December Atlantic.*