

## Contemporary Thought.

THE tendency of the legislation of the day is to guard the public health; and wisely so, for to most of us health means everything. But Acts of Parliament are passed in vain, if the public intellect cannot understand and does not appreciate them. We endeavour, by education, to raise the intellectual standard of the people, and thus hope to prevent poverty and crime; and there is a growing impression, not without foundation, that a great deal of crime, not to mention lunacy, is due to ill-health. That is, the mind is influenced in childhood by disease and unhealthy surroundings, and consequently, the individual has not a fair chance in the battle of life.—*P. A. Karkeek, M.D., C.S., etc., Medical Health Officer, Torquay, in Sanitary Record.*

THE pupil must be brought in face of the facts through experiment and demonstration. He should pull the plant to pieces and see how it is constructed. He must vex the electric cylinder till it yields him its sparks. He must apply with his own hand the magnet to the needle. He must see water broken up into its constituent parts, and witness the violence with which its elements unite. Unless he is brought into actual contact with the facts, and taught to observe and bring them into relation with the science evolved from them, it were better that instruction in science should be left alone, for one of the first lessons he must learn from science is not to trust in authority, but to demand proof for each assertion.—*Sir Lyon Playfair, in Popular Science Monthly.*

THAT popular abomination known as "Beef, Iron and Wine," which is now sold so extensively, not only by druggists, but by tradesmen of various kinds, deserves a little special attention from the medical profession. It is an agreeable mixture to the sight and taste; its name is a triple combination of seductive mononyms; while, taken into the stomach, it acts as a gentle "pick up," to the worn and over-sensitive nerves of the ladies. It has, in consequence, become a popular, if not a fashionable tippie, and is indiscriminately used to an extent that is, we believe, not entirely free from danger. Every medical man knows that the amount of actual beef or food in these various preparations is insignificant, and that it is the wine after all that makes them liked, and leads so many persons to purchase their second bottle.—*Medical Record.*

HUXLEY seems to think that "that man is liberally educated who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is clear with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of nature, and of the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned

to love *all* beauty whether of nature or of art, to hate all villainy, and to respect others as himself." Such is the picture of a typical manhood. Everything is made subservient to *manhood*. A teacher thus educated will not fail to exalt his profession. He will call to his aid culture as a supplement to his education. He will give his pupils a love for culture, as well as a hungering and thirsting for knowledge.—*Ex.*

THE real want of the day, as relates to the health of the people, the well-being of the masses, is education in all matters pertaining to health. The municipalities will not educate the people in this way. If a few enlightened ones should do so, comparatively little good would follow when neighbouring ones do not do likewise. One or two Provinces may do such work, but unless all do it, and uniformly, the benefit would be comparatively but little. In order to have it done successfully, the Federal authorities must do it. By one central authority or source it can not only be done much better, but very much less expensively. By the Federal authorities health statistics can be best collected and then utilized in the education of the people. The real basis of practical sanitary work is doubtless a good system of vital statistics and disease reports. For the former—accurate statistics of mortality and natality—a good deal of money would be required. The Government have commenced in a small way, but much extension is needed. Educate the people in the laws of health, and correct vital statistics may soon be much more easily obtained.—*Man.*

THE gaining of a day in going across the Pacific Ocean westward, from San Francisco to Yokohama, Japan, is a state of affairs which puzzles a great many people. In explanation, let any one imagine himself to start at noonday, and travel to the westward as rapidly as the sun—or more correctly, as the earth turns eastward on its axis, it is evident that to him there would be no rising or setting of the sun. There would be none, as the sun would be constantly overhead. In like manner, if a person were to start eastward at noon, and travel at the same rapid rate, say 1,000 miles per hour, there would be to him two full days in twenty-four hours: *i.e.*, two sunrises, two noons, two sunsets, and two nights. The reason for adding or dropping a day while crossing the Pacific, instead of the Atlantic, Indian or other oceans, is because the 180th meridian east or west is found there: that is, the point immediately on the opposite side of the earth from the observatory at Greenwich, near London, which navigators uniformly count as the starting-point, or zero. In travelling eastward or against the sun's apparent course, it is necessary to drop a day, and for convenience and uniformity this is done at the 180th meridian. In like manner, in travelling westward, or with the sun, one day must be added or counted twice.—*S. H. EWING.*

A MOVEMENT is on foot in Montreal, by leading scientists, to petition the Government to provide means to defray the expenses of a systematic and thorough exploration of the northern mound system, before the plough of the settlers levels the tumuli. During last summer a well-known archaeologist explored several districts in the south-western part of Manitoba, with a view of ascertaining if the

known northern limits of the mound builders' remains could be extended. Some interesting and valuable data were secured, and a number of mounds were found on the Pembina River, and on the chain of lakes west of it. Two mounds on the Red River were opened in October, and valuable veins discovered, including ornaments cut from sea shells peculiar to southern waters. The structure of the mounds was found to be identical nearly with that of the famous ones of Ohio and the lower Mississippi. It was also discovered that a continuous line of mounds extended from the central Mississippi straight through to Lake Winnipeg. A large group has been discovered on the Rainy River in Ontario, and the evidence secured seems to go a long way to prove that the problem whose solution has so long sought for by American archaeologists will be settled by fuller explorations and investigations in the North-West.—*Journal of Education.*

ON the subject of school holidays, in reply to the letter of "Pater," which we quoted from the *Globe*, "Didascalos" writes as follows:—"Rest is needful both to masters and boys; to the former perhaps more than the latter. A teacher's work is brain work, sometimes of a very trying order, and generally associated with the strain of attending now to this boy, now to that, and keeping at the same time good discipline. Six or seven hours spent thus tire a teacher considerably, but, as a rule, he still has further duties to perform, such as the supervision of the boys' night-work, the correction of exercises, and the preparation of material for the next day. This makes a total of eight or nine hours of very exhausting toil. Most teachers find that towards the end of the term their energy abates, their memories weaken, and their power of putting things clearly diminishes. During the first week of vacation, many of them will sleep the clock round, and, in addition to that, doze during the day. Nature cries out for repose, and the case is the same, in a less degree, with the boys. Again, suppose a teacher has to get up a subject for his boys, say, Roman History from the Gracchi to the end of the Antonines, when can he do so, unless he has a good holiday? And now for the serious evil of holidays. What is it? Teachers and boys return bright and fresh, ready for any amount of work. The boys are somewhat rusty, it is true, but a week's judicious drill in back work repairs all that has been lost, and fixes it as no effort at any other time can. "Pater's" complaint of too much holiday, sounds singular enough, coming, as it does, at a time when we have just escaped from clamorous outcries against over-pressure. If his son is preparing for a competitive examination, an ordinary school is surely not the place for him: for no wise master would think of regulating the work of his form to suit the requirements of a boy cramming for an examination, and who will certainly leave the school if he passes. Such a boy should go to a private tutor, or to a school that organizes special classes for candidates for competitive examinations. In conclusion, the present school arrangements are the outcome of a long experience, and "Pater" may rest assured, that able men, who know and love their profession, would be the last to sacrifice the interests of either parents and boys to the desire of personal ease."—*The Schoolmaster.*