

Contemporary Thought.

NOT a month passes, without some leading French publication drawing attention, either satirically or otherwise, to the inefficient manner in which the article called mind is manufactured in the national workshops devoted to that purpose and named lyceums, colleges and schools.—*The American Register, Paris.*

THE hand will never be so easily trained to accurate manipulation as in the lower grades of school. The child wants to be taught to handle plants and minerals with ease and grace. He needs little instruction if he is given an opportunity, and is told what to do with them. Here, especially, it is easiest to learn how to do by doing.—*The American Teacher.*

THE best work cannot be done in high schools unless pupils are taught in the lower grades to familiarize themselves with minerals, plants, animals, and mechanical forces. The more a child knows from actual experience in work and play, the better equipped is he for study. Memory and imagination are both aided by having a wide range of knowledge of concrete things.—*The American Teacher.*

THE kindergarten should be made a part of the regular school system whenever public sentiment can be brought up to that point. It will never be developed as it should be, will never accomplish the good it ought to until it is officially engrafted upon the general system of education. We appreciate the financial difficulty since it is expensive teaching, and there will be danger of freighting the school system with more burdens than it will bear.—*The American Teacher.*

HAVE you a dull, stupid pupil? What makes him so? It may be he has as keen a mind as there is in the school, but is merely introspective, looking and living all the time within his own mind. Many of the greatest men in history were the dull, stupid boys at school. With schemes, plans, hopes, aspirations all their own, they thought more of them than of their studies. It requires tact and experience to lead such a child out of himself, away from self-attention to external affairs. It can be done, as a rule, only by making it clear that his own aims will be soonest attained by the aid of studies and investigations connected with school work.—*The American Teacher.*

THE direct money value of the system of drawing, which is now being so largely introduced into the public school system everywhere in this country, may be gathered from the following statement: It has been stated by competent judges that, through the instruction in industrial drawing given in the public schools, the establishment of schools of design, and art museums, England has added 50 per cent. to the value of her manufactured articles during the last thirty years. In the United States, 50 per cent. of the workmen lack this knowledge and ability, and as a result, they must work under constant supervision, doing less and inferior work, and receiving less wages than they could command as more intelligent workmen.—*American Journal of Education.*

THE creed of the "new education," so far as it has been formulated, is embodied in this text. *We learn to do by doing.* My purpose is to dis-

cover whether this new movement is in the line of historic truth, or whether it is a departure from the truth. Twenty-four centuries ago Bias, one of the seven wise men of Greece, left to the world this apothegm: *Know and then do.* Twenty-one centuries later Lord Bacon wrote: "Studies perfect nature and are perfected by experience." In both these cases the sequence is the same: the antecedent to *doing* is *knowing*; we learn to do by knowing. At the present moment all professional and technical instruction is administered on the hypothesis that knowing is the necessary preparation for doing; and the term quackery has been set apart to express the common contempt for the practice of learning to do by doing. Here are three landmarks appearing at intervals through a long procession of centuries, and they are all in a direct line. The thought of Bias is sanctioned by Bacon, and embodied in the very civilization of the present moment. If anything has been settled by the experience and common sense of mankind, it is that action should be preceded and guided by knowledge.—*Prof. W. H. Payne at the American Institute of Instruction, Newport, R.I.*

LORD HOUGHTON was the intimate friend and favorite associate of Bishop Thirlwall, and his cheerful paradoxes often dissipated the moral indignation of Carlyle. A commentator of Mr. Froude's biography compared not inaccurately the friendly contests of the gloomy prophet and the cheerful man of the world to a combat between the *secutor* and the *retarius* of the Roman arena. Notwithstanding an occasional burst of superficial irritation, Carlyle delighted in the audacious sophisms and witty evasions with which Lord Houghton baffled his eloquent attacks. Two humorists as dissimilar to another as they were unlike the rest of the world could not be more equally matched. There were probably some serious and unimaginative judgments to which perpetual versatility and multiform irony failed to approve themselves; but candid observers, who felt an imperfect sympathy with Lord Houghton, might have satisfied themselves that his reputation was well deserved when they saw that he was valued by his friends almost in the proportion of their respective opportunities of understanding his character.

IT is right and wise to have a Minister of Education directly responsible to the legislature and to the people, but he should be aided in the most practical way. No one man, no two men, no three men, can be found capable of, nor should be entrusted with, the working out of the complex and momentous issues of all educational arrangements connected with the present and future life of the country. Let our men of experience, culture, vast knowledge and honor, look at the matter in a business-like manner. What we want is a council composed of representative educationists—men of university experience, men of the inspectorate class, men of high school system, and from other departments of practical educational work. Let the number of this council be named by the legislature. The universities should choose one or more from their several professors as members of this council, the high school masters should select their delegates, and the public school inspectors should likewise send deputies; so on to the limit laid down by prudence and wisdom. The legislature could appoint say one fourth of the council. The

members of said council should meet regularly and construct all the curricula for the entire school system of the Province. The Minister would then be in the proper position, aided by a competent council, relieved of much drudgery, and responsible to the country for opposing or accepting the recommendations of the council. The members of the council would be directly responsible to their several electors, and might be elected annually, if satisfactory to their educational constituents. All school-books (with their prices), holidays, times and methods of examining, appointment of examiners (with the remuneration), general school classification, qualifications of teachers, and a universal standard of matriculation, since this is high school work. Of course many other details could be mentioned, but the above will do at present.—*Kosmos for September.*

THE moral teaching in school is by far the most difficult part of a conscientious teacher's work. The mere drill of lessons may, with tolerable ease, be done in a manner satisfactory to all concerned, but the moral training is so full of perplexing problems, and withal of great possibilities for good or evil, that the earnest teacher almost quails before the task. In fact only the best teachers succeed in giving this religious tone to the school, and only those of great natural aptness and of long experience have wisdom and discretion enough to place high moral and religious motives before their pupils with much hope of success. Every teacher who makes this a daily effort finds it a wearing struggle—a struggle not without its heroic and ripening elements, indeed—but yet a constant and trying one. There are in school routine so many provocations, so many petty annoyances, so much to vex, so much to disturb the evenness of one's temper that he is in almost momentary danger of losing an advantage which weeks of laborious effort have secured him. The listlessness of pupils, their idleness, their inattention, their thoughtlessness, or downright mischievousness, their persistent carelessness, and consequent blundering, their impertinence and rudeness, their deceit and lying, their wickedness in act and in implication, must all be dealt with, often very severely, often when patience has withdrawn her kindly rule—and at such a time there is a great danger of one's becoming a poor exemplar of that gospel which sweetens the disposition and perfects character, and invests its votary with the divine halo of a genial, unselfish and winsome kindness. There can be no doubt that one is working at a decided disadvantage when he has to compel children prone to idle pleasure to devote themselves to irksome and uncongenial tasks, and when he must needs in seeming harshness inflict the necessary penalties. For in the course of the work pupils are often incensed at their master, and then sheer stubbornness defeats his most cherished hopes. Assuredly the influence exerted in seasons of regulated devotion amid such surroundings can never be so direct and positive as that wielded in such an institution as the Sabbath school, where nothing need occur to mar the harmony of teacher and pupils, and where the teacher is known not as a petty tyrant, but as a real benefactor. And we must bear in mind that as this part of the work is the most difficult, so it requires the longest experience for its successful accomplishment.—*J. H. Farmer, M.A., in Canadian Baptist.*