

CURRENT LITERATURE.

THE *Contemporary Review* opens with a short paper on "Public School Education," by Sir John Lubbock. Its object is to arouse parents and the public generally to the perfunctory manner in which science is taught in the public and endowed schools, notwithstanding the reports of successive Commissions on the subject. The writer contends that a sufficient groundwork in natural science would not necessarily exclude satisfactory training in classics or modern languages. "It will, no doubt," he observes, "be said by some that it is better to know few subjects well, than to have a smattering of many. This is no doubt true, but no one wishes that boys should have a smattering of anything." At present, "boys may obtain University certificates, while they know nothing of history, nothing of geography, nothing of any modern language, or of any branch of science." Mr. Llewelyn Davies continues his essay on "Wesleyan Methodism, in Wesley's lifetime and after." It is written from a Broad Church stand-point, and of course is intended to prove to Wesleyans that they ought to have remained in the Established Church, and that, if they were wise, they would return to it as soon as possible. In the first instalment of the paper, Mr. Davies traced the life and character of John Wesley, and laid particular stress upon his high sacerdotal and sacramental views, and it is plain throughout that the writer is not at all loth to indicate the weak and superstitious traits in the great founder's character. He assails—and we think successfully, the traditional notion that Wesley was "driven from the Church," and gives prominence to what was admittedly one secret of his success—his autocratic and overbearing temper. At the same time, we fail to see how the great and eminently good work he accomplished could have been rendered effective otherwise than by indomitable power of will, reinforced as Wesley believed—and this must not be lost sight of—by the direct influence of the Divine Spirit. Mr. Davies enumerates the distinctive features of Methodism as: (1.) Field-preaching; (2.) Itinerancy; (3.) Perfectionism—a doctrine made familiar by the preaching of Mr. Varley and Mr. and Mrs. Pearsall Smith—which is defined to be not merely aiming at perfection, but the new dogma "that perfection is attainable in this life," and was actually given instantaneously to many members of his societies;

(4.) Hostility to Calvinism; (5.) Bodily asceticism, including early rising and fast ing; (6.) Attendance on ordinances, including preaching at 5 a. m.; (7.) Simplicity in dress and expenditure; (8.) Society meetings; (9.) Absolute government in the societies; (10.) Adhesion to the Church of England. Of course, it is not difficult to show that Methodism is not now what John Wesley intended it to be, and further, that although the Church has no iron creed or confession, its ministers are pledged to preach the doctrine contained in the founder's "Notes on the New Testament," and his four volumes of sermons, which they do, in a certain qualified sense. After all, Methodism remains a wonderful power in the religious world, and is hardly to be snuffed out under the courteous method of extinction proposed by Mr. Davies. It is courteous and charitable, as becomes a Broad Churchman, but by no means sympathetic. Still the information, chiefly derived from Tyerman, regarding the development of modern Methodism, and the sketch of its present organization, are both interesting and instructive.

Mr. Andrew Hamilton's paper on "Goethe and Minna Herzlieb," touches upon a controverted point in literary history. According to some Goethe and Minna represent, under somewhat reversed conditions, the semi-mythical Swift and Stella, or Cadenus and Vanessa, now in course of explosion under Mr. Forster's manipulation. The young lady was an adopted daughter of Herr Frommann, the publisher of Jena, whose wife by the way seems to have been the very flower of maternity, Goethe appears to have cherished a very strong passion for the girl; not so strong, however, as to overpower his self-restraint. Whether she was the Otilie of "The Elective Affinities" or not, seems still unsettled; even if she was, Mr. Hamilton clearly demonstrates that it could only be as a lay-figure, in which Goethe laid his mind-spectre, and had done with it forever. The Rev. H. N. Oxenham—not of course to be confounded with the author of the "Letter" to Mr. Gladstone—discusses "Eternal Perdition and Universalism, from a Roman Catholic point of view." It is a defence of the Latin Church view, with a dash of Lord Bacon in it. Some of the arguments adduced would suit Orthodox Protestants well enough, but the divergence is soon evident. The first assault