

## Contemporary Thought.

THE alternative—that religious bodies should possess schools and colleges of their own, supported by Government funds—is the thin edge of a wedge, which, if driven in to its logical extent, would necessitate Government aid to every religious and, in deed, irreligious body, from the Ritualists to the Agnostics. The chief difficulty to a proper understanding of the respective spheres of religious and secular education seems to be that to the word "religious" has been given a meaning which belongs properly to the word "moral." The secular teacher has ethical functions to discharge as well as purely pedagogic functions. He will teach his pupils the value of right and wrong, and point out to them the true principles of conduct generally.—*The Week.*

I AM of the opinion that too much in quantity is sought to be taught in (many of) the public schools; the result of this being, not that the children study too much, but that they don't study anything. What the average public school boy and girl needs is *more* genuine mental exercise, an earlier and judiciously trained development, and *not* "more frequent holidays and vacations" than now given. But the parents must not throw everything on the teachers; at the risk of "nervous exhaustion," they must do something themselves towards keeping the children properly at work. They must also see that their offspring have regular habits of life, for here is undoubtedly where most of the trouble lies. It is not mental work at school which hurts; it is irregular, perhaps vicious, habits of living, and improper or excessive pleasure-seeking, which do the damage, and concerning which the statisticians are silent.—"H," in *N. Y. Nation.*

THE *Globe* endeavors to awaken public sympathy in Dr. Wilson's scheme, by the following most extraordinary plea: "It has to be borne in remembrance that to many of our young men, the sons of farmers, of artisans, or others in humble life, the giving up of the years from 16 or 17 to 20 or 21, to unproductive study is itself a demand involving very large sacrifice." What does it mean? Is it that the young man suffers a loss during these four years which private individuals or the state should make up for him? How utterly and unspeakably absurd it is to speak in this connection of "giving up" and "unproductive study" and "large sacrifice." Is not the young man to be inestimably benefited by the education itself? When the state provides this benefit for him free, must it also coax him to come and take it, and then coddle him into good humor when he does come? We have heard of paternal government, but surely this would be grand-paternal.—*The 'Varsity, on University Scholarships.*

It is interesting, in the history of the university, to recall the applications of eminent men such as Huxley and Tyndall, for vacant professorships, years ago, before their names had become famous. We lately came across a copy of the testimonials presented by John Tyndall, Ph.D., with his application for the professorship of Natural Philosophy in the University of Toronto. It is dated Oct. 6th, 1851, just thirty-four years ago. The testimonials are fourteen in number, from the foremost

scientists of the day, among which are the following names: Edmund Becquerel, E. du Bois-Reymond, Edward Sabine, R. W. Bunsen, A. De la Rive, H. W. Dove, J. D. Forbes, J. P. Joule, Plucher, P. Riess, (Sir) William Thomson. The list closes with the following statement: "I am permitted to state that Dr. Faraday and the Astronomer Royal are prepared to respond to any personal reference made to them respecting my qualifications for the professorship in question." One is tempted to cavil at fate that the candidature of so eminent a man should be unsuccessful; the only consolation is that if Professor Tyndall had come to Toronto he would not have stayed here after his reputation had become established.—*The 'Varsity.*

IT seems to us strange that the question of making the public schools free should be under discussion in a civilized country. Yet it is a fact that just now England is deliberating whether it is best to free her schools from the obnoxious rate-bill tax. It is urged that it is demoralizing and pauperizing for a parent to receive free tuition for his children, and that it is unjust to those who have no children of their own. It is very evident that if attendance at school is compulsory, admission to school should be free. The London School Board has been trying the difficult problem of compelling attendance and charging for tuition, and it doesn't work well at all. It is found that the conditions at home, and the character of the parents must be changed before rate bills can be collected. Drunkenness, improvidence, and vice demoralize London poor, and it is often impossible to collect the fees. The board says that the parent must send his children to school, and also must pay for their tuition. The child goes, but the parent doesn't pay. Even the small amount of 1d. per week cannot be collected. The only possible way out of the difficulty is to make the schools absolutely free to all, and then enforce attendance. Make the schools so good that all, even the rich, will be glad to avail themselves of their advantages, and tax everybody for their support. A public school should be the very best school possible to organize and sustain in a country. There should be no excuse for private schools where public schools are supported by universal taxation.—*N. Y. School Journal.*

THE Board of Governors of the Industrial School Association, of which Mr. W. H. Howland is president, have decided to proceed with the erection of a main building for the educational and industrial training of two hundred boys, and a cottage to accommodate forty boys, on their grounds at Mimico, which are the gift of the Ontario Government. The main building will be devoted to the daily occupations of the lads, and will contain schoolrooms, work-rooms, dining-room, etc., while the cottages, which will be under the charge of matrons, will serve as homes to which they will retire in the evening, and where they will be under the beneficent influences of judicious home training. The buildings in contemplation will cost \$26,000, of which \$15,000 has already been subscribed. This includes \$6,000 given by a benevolent Toronto lady for the erection of a cottage. We know of no association whose objects more strongly commend themselves to the benevolent and patriotic feelings of our wealthy citizens

than this one. Not only will the neglected and forsaken children it takes charge of be prevented from becoming a burden to the country as criminals in our gaols, but they will be made to contribute to its prosperity, by being taught some useful employment. A good deal of the success of this institution, however, will depend upon the person the association can secure to act as superintendent. He should be skilled in the management of children as a successful teacher, and at the same time be able to exercise intelligent supervision over their manual employments, and above all, he should be thoroughly in sympathy with the association in the aims it has in view.—*The Week.*

THE death of Lord Shaftesbury leaves a blank in the educational world. He has identified himself so closely with the interests of ragged schools and the educational welfare of the outcasts of London that his name will long be remembered as one of the most unselfish men of the nineteenth century. It should be remembered, however, that he accomplished a mighty work in connection with the factory and mine legislation more than forty years ago. What Wilberforce and his friends had done for the negro, Lord Ashley (as the *Times* has well pointed out) resolved to do for the white slave of the factory and the mine. The story of our factory legislation, which began in 1833, and closed twenty years later, is in one sense distressing indeed, for it is a horrible tale of human suffering and depravation below, of human indifference and hardheartedness above; but in another sense it is of good omen, for in the end the conscience of England prevailed, and the most crying wrongs were righted as far as legislation could right them. Relief was secured, first to children, and then to women working in factories, collieries and mines. In spite of the most strenuous opposition from the manufacturing interest and of cold encouragement from the Government, Lord Ashley, as the Earl of Shaftesbury was then called, won the fight. In 1833 the first position was gained; in 1843 Lord Ashley's powerful appeal for education for children of the manufacturing districts was supported by the House; in 1844 the Ten Hours Bill became law, and at various times during the next nine years those modifications were introduced into it which form the law that exists to this day. This we may fairly call the great work of Lord Shaftesbury's life. But it was accompanied and followed by a score of other efforts, nearly all equally successful, to raise the condition, especially the moral condition, of the poorest of the poor. The great Education Act of 1870, with its far-reaching results, has somewhat obscured the work of the ragged schools; but the good which these have done since 1846 has been enormous. It was no exaggeration when, at the ragged school gathering which celebrated Lord Shaftesbury's eightieth birthday, Lord Aberdeen said, "In London alone, at least 300,000 of the youth of both sexes have been rescued from the ranks of the criminal and dangerous classes and made good and useful citizens, loyal and faithful subjects of Her Majesty." The list of Lord Shaftesbury's good works might be greatly extended, for his energy was boundless. The reformatories, the shoeblack brigade, and many other institutions for watching over the children of the very poor owe much to his unwearied and self-denying efforts.—*The Schoolmaster, London.*