Contemporary Thought.

THE introduction of the kindergarten system at the Perkins Institute for the Blind, at South Boston, has proved of immense benefit to very young children, saving many of them from degenerating into a state of idiocy.

YOUNG writers who find publishers obdurate, should find consolation and a valuable suggestion in the fact that Henry W. Longfellow and James Russell Lowell had to pay for the publication of their first works.—*Current.*

IT is a good plan to hold a fortnightly or monthly examination in writing, extending over the principal subjects to be taught, and conducted under the same conditions of silence and complete isolation which are observed in public examinations. Besides this, it is well much more frequently to give, in connection with each subject, a single question to be answered fully in writing. The teacher should read some of the answers aloud, and point out their several defects, and then invite the class to watch him while he gives a model answer, as complete as he can make it, both as regards matter and style.—*J. G. Fitch.*

HOW to educate future jurymen, in the schools, is a question of great importance; and yet we fear it is little thought of by teachers in training pupils for the active duties and responsibilities of life. Boys and girls, even when very young, can be educated to pronounce judgment on questions of right and wrong. Under proper conditions, the moral judgment may be trained by calling upon pupils to pronounce upon the conduct of their companions and made to feel that they are responsible for a just decision. The judicious teacher can often appeal to pupils, in good faith, in regard to awarding commendation, or in pronouncing a penalty; and their keenness and honesty in giving their verdicts will often surprise him. By similar methods valuable lessons in practical morality and in the exercise of personal judgment may be taught that will prepare them to act in future life in the jury-box.—*American Teacher.*

"HE was delighted that Wycliffe College was now affiliated with the University of Toronto, and believed it would have the effect of making its students Broad Churchmen in the true and catholic sense of the term. By the arrangement of the university curriculum students of the divinity schools could take options, such as Church History or Oriental languages in the place of certain other branches of study less suited to their special requirements. Knox College was about to apply to the General Assembly for the foundation of a Chair of Church History. McMaster Hall had lately increased its professoriate, and he trusted these examples would stir up the friends of Wycliffe to enlarge its staff of teachers and so to furnish to their beloved church men trained for its ministry gifted with those graces which God alone can bestow; but with them, also, endowed with the advantages that our thoroughly equipped university offers to all its undergraduates."—*President Wilson, at Wycliffe College.*

WHILE the Eastern continents have had their Bronze and Iron Ages, America has had its Copper Age. From Lake Superior to snow-capped Chimborazo copper weapons, implements and ornaments are frequently discovered in mounds and tumuli. The Ohio or Kentucky farmer occasionally ploughs up a copper axe, spear head or gorget in his fields; in Mexico and Central America such relics are common, and the same may be said of Peru Mound Builders, Aztecs, Toltecs, Mayas, Peruvians—all used copper for a variety of purposes. They had a method of tempering it which is one of the lost arts. Tools and weapons so treated possessed a permanent edge of extreme fineness. It was long a mystery where the Mound Builders mined their copper; but within the last half century discoveries have been made by modern miners upon the shores and islands of Lake Superior which set the matter at rest. It is evident that this mysterious race mined copper there for ages, judging from the extent of their operations. Their rude stone mallets have been found in deserted mines, mixed with long-accumulated *débris*. Following their lead, modern miners have made rich discoveries. Curiously, they do not appear to have smelted this metal, but, finding it in an almost pure state, they hammered it into the shape desired.—*H. D. Mason, in the Current.*

THE New York State Legislature will shortly have to grapple with the problem, who shall be the new Superintendent of Public Instruction, as the President is already wrestling with the more weighty problem, who shall be the successor of General Eaton? The Little Falls *Journal and Courier*, speaking of the State superintendency, hits the nail squarely on the head when it says: "It goes without saying that the position is one of great trust, and that the incumbent has need of a broad culture, keen insight, and rare executive ability. His decision in proper cases of appeal becomes law. The need of care in selecting this official is evident. Already the chronic office-seekers are buzzing about the Capitol. However trite the statement, it is yet true that the schools are the substructure of the State. The party that guards them best may serve its future best. . . . The fifty thousand men connected with the New York schools as trustees or teachers ask for a leader who knows something of their needs, and who will devote his energies to the betterment of the educational system. New York State is rich enough in material to fill this position effectively. The party that now is to select this official has upon occasion made a memorable record. May it not once more rise to its conscious duty and find among the educational workers a second Horace Mann?" *N. E. Journal of Education.*

THE English language compels the Englishman to be practical, even at the cost of apparent logical consistency. It is rich and flexible, as Guizot acknowledges. In its foundation, it is Teutonic, and trains, as Madame de Staël admits, to Teutonic strength of individualism and reason, without giving to these features an exclusive prominence. By its Latin and Norman elements it demands appeal to authority, and thus counterbalances the individualizing and rationalizing Saxon elements. Its vocabulary, absorbing into itself new terms from every quarter, is adapted to every kind of human employment. In the mouth of an orator, it can express either the most tender and pathetic descriptions and appeals, or the fiercest and sternest denunciations. By its combination of Saxon monosyllables and flowing, dignified words of Latin derivation, it can round its periods with most mellifluous rhythm. By its well marked accentuation, its power of inversion, and its capabilities of rhyme, it is adapted to the finest poetry. Even in verses whose misty sense eludes the grasp of thought or in those poetic word plays from which all sense is absent, it can charm by the melodious, bird-like harmony of sweet sounds. In its literature, it covers the whole round of human thought, and presents names that are unrivalled. While ink and paper last, it will stand forth allied with the names of those who were the champions of both liberty and law.—*Rev. Dr. Roy, in Evangelical Churchman.*

WHEN about ten years old, his father fitted for him a small workshop, and there he constructed models of saw-mills, fire-engines, steamboats, steam-engines, electrical and other machines. One of the pastimes of his childhood was to take to pieces and put together again the family clock, and at twelve years he was able to do the same with a patent-lever watch, with no tools but his pocket-knife. When thirteen, misfortune overtook his father, and he had to withdraw from school and work his own way. His parents went to St. Louis in 1833 and he went with them. The steamer was burned in the night on the way there, and he landed barefooted and coatless, on the very spot now covered by the abutment of the great steel bridge which he designed and built. The only opening in the way of business that offered was to sell apples on the street, and by this means, for a few months, he sustained himself and assisted in supporting his mother and sisters. In time he obtained a situation with a mercantile firm, where he remained for five years. One of the heads of the house having an excellent library, gave him access to it, and he used his opportunity well to study subjects bearing upon mechanics, machinery, civil engineering, and physical science. In 1839 he obtained employment as a clerk or purser on a Mississippi River steamer. He again made the best use of his opportunity to acquire that complete knowledge of the great river which he was afterwards able to put to such good account in the noble enterprises he so fortunately carried into effect. In 1842 he constructed a diving-bell boat to recover the cargoes of sunken steamers. This was followed with a boat of larger tonnage, provided with machinery for pumping out the sand and water and lifting the entire hull and cargo of the vessel. A company was formed to operate this device, and it soon had a business that covered the entire Mississippi River, from Balize to Galena, and even branched into some of its tributaries. By his methods, a great many valuable steamers were set afloat and restored to usefulness which it would not previously have been possible to save, as they would have been buried very soon beneath the river-sands. It was while engaged in this business that he gained a thorough knowledge of the laws which control the flow of silt-bearing rivers, and of the Mississippi he was able to say years afterwards that there was not a stretch in its bed fifty miles long, between St. Louis and New Orleans, in which he had not stood upon the bottom of the stream beneath the shelter of the diving-bell.—*From a "Sketch of James B. Eads," in Popular Science Monthly for February.*