

Contemporary Thought.

A CORRESPONDENT of *The Nation* points out several inaccuracies in Bohn's translation of Schiller's *Maid of Orleans*.

AXEL GUSTAFSON writes on the temperance question under the title: *The Foundation of Death, a Study of the Drink Question*.

THE Senate of West Virginia has passed a bill admitting women to the State University, with a view to increasing the patronage of the institution. Surely a better reason than that could have been found.

THE Harvard University authorities have concluded to continue for the present the practice of Latinizing the names of students in the annual catalogues, despite the effort made to substitute plain English. Banks, however, still persist in requiring cheques to be signed in English.

AT the recent meeting of the German naturalists and physicians, at Magdeburg, Professor Landois, of Münster, spoke of the imperfections and comparative uselessness of most zoological gardens, and advised the institution of smaller gardens having well-defined fields of observation and investigation.

A PAPER by Mr. F. Cope Whitehouse, stating his reasons for believing Fingal's Cave in the Island of Staffa to be of artificial construction, accompanied by photographs illustrating his views, was presented to the French Academy of Sciences at its meeting of December 1st, by M. Daubrey, the geologist.

THE discussion of the question of "National Aid to Education," begun by Gen. John A. Logan, in the February issue of *The Chautauquan*, is concluded in the March number. General Logan ably argues for an annual appropriation of \$50,000,000 to educational purposes and shows conclusively how such an appropriation might be made and "not add one dollar to the taxes already imposed."

AT the meeting of the Society of Arts in December, Mr. W. H. Preece read a paper in which he stated that electric lighting is flourishing in America much more than in England. There are probably ninety thousand arc-lamps alight every night in the United States. He has found it a dismal experience to be transferred from the brilliantly illuminated avenues of New York to the dark streets of London.

DR. R. BRUDENELL CARTER has published a paper urging that the culture and improvement of the eye-sight should receive a share of the attention that is given to physical development in other directions. He believes that it is not school-life alone, but the general conditions of civilization that have diminished our capacity of vision, and cites instances of sharp sight and long sight in savages, that were not regarded as at all unusual, where white men were exceedingly dull of vision.

IN a late circular of information of the Bureau of Education (No. 4, 1884), containing the proceedings of the Department of Superintendence of the National Educational Association at Washington a year ago, are some remarks of Superintendent

Geo. J. Luckey, of Pittsburgh, on the subject of reading—of "readers," particularly. "It is painful to reflect," he says, "that the vast majority of our children, after spending seven or eight years of the best period of their lives in the school-room, have never read a book"—only the disconnected and half-intelligent scraps of the primary, first second, etc., even to sixth, readers. His remedy is a school circulating library.

IN the attitude of Emerson toward his own countrymen his personality is most interesting. With all his written and spoken words concerning America,—and it is impossible to read his *May Day* without perceiving how great a relief to him was the return of peace after the separating war,—one fails to find the evidence of any passionate devotion to his country. The occasional glimpses which Dr. Holmes gives of the poet on his travels in his own country serve to deepen the impression which one forms of the purely spectacular shape of the country in Mr Emerson's vision. He was not indifferent to the struggles going on, and yet they were rather disturbances to his spirit than signs of life which quickened his own pulse.—*March Atlantic*.

EDUCATION is not a mechanical art. It does not take a given amount of material, and by carving, cutting and joining, finally produce a wished product, as a house, a wagon, or a gun. It is more akin to agriculture, which stirs the soil, plants the seeds and directs the growths, or perhaps forestry, which trains the tree growths through a long series of years, furnishes us the best illustration of the teacher's work. It is not reasonable to ask at the close of each year that a certain number of finished scholars be shown, like the finished products of the work-shop. What we may reasonably look for is a steady growth of intelligence in the school population, and the constant appearance on the stage of a supply of intelligent citizens, and of educated men and women, to take up and carry on the work of society. If in each decade some positive advancement in the average education of the people, and some fair increase in the number of well educated persons can be shown, then the schools are justified, as a whole, in however many special cases they may have failed.—*The Present Age*.

ONE of the truest things ever written is the following from President Garfield's pen:—"It has long been my opinion that we are all educated, whether children, men, or women, far more by personal influence than by books and the apparatus of the school-room. The privilege of sitting down before a great, clear-headed, large-hearted man, and breathing the atmosphere of his life, and being drawn up to him and lifted up by him, and learning his methods of thinking and living, is, in itself, an enormous educating power." This reminds one strongly of that splendid passage in the *Sartor Resartus*:—"How can an inanimate gerund-grinder, the like of whom will, in a subsequent century, be manufactured in Nurnberg out of wood and leather, foster the growth of anything; much more of mind, which grows, not like a vegetable (by having its roots littered with etymological compost), but like a spirit, by mysterious contact of spirit; Thought kindling itself at the fire of living Thought? How shall he give kindling, in whose inward man there

is no live coal, but all is burnt out to a dead grammatical cinder? The Hinterschlag Professors knew Syntax enough; and of the human soul this much: that it had a faculty called Memory, and could be acted on through the muscular integument by appliance of birch-roads."

DR. J. D. ANDERSON, in *Education* for January-February, considers the aesthetic element in education. He holds it to be an essential duty for the teacher to inculcate an appreciation of the beautiful by both precept and example. He enlarges upon the good influence of attractive surroundings and insists that the aesthetic spirit should pervade everything in and about the school-room. Among some of the practical suggestions he makes is the following: "A teacher is not going out of the way of his duty if he corrects a boy for coming to school with unwashed hands or unkempt hair; or if he should draw attention to some defect in his dressing or clothing; if he should refer to an unbrushed jacket or a slovenly-put-on tie. All this comes within his jurisdiction, and he must adjudicate upon the delinquencies with all the soberness and gravity that such offences deserve." But this adjudication, it may be added, should be undertaken only by a teacher who is endowed with very sound judgment, exquisite discretion and a very warm heart. Children may be made altogether too prim, and neatness too severely enforced does not always conduce to cheerfulness in the school-room.—*The Current*.

A PROMINENT New England educator, Hon. A. P. Stone, of Springfield, Mass., severely criticises some of the present conditions of the public educational system. He says the greatest need of a large number of teachers is a knowledge of their business; that in very many cases pupils are taught to memorize instead of being led to a working understanding of fundamental principles. "There is no disguising the fact," he remarks, "that all along the educational horizon there is going on a contest between training and cramming; between independent and routine work." He regards it to be the chief duty of the teacher to make well-trained, self-raised men rather than produce mathematicians, chemists or literators. These views of the teacher's obligations to society have been so frequently expressed of late as to indicate a decided reaction against the machine system. The personality of the teacher himself is growing to be regarded as more and more important. That which was so good in the character of the old school-master of a long time ago is finding its proper appreciation. It seems to be the opinion of the best authorities that children cannot be coined like dollars.—*The Current*.

LAST year, when Mr. James Russell Lowell delivered the address at the unveiling of Fielding's bust at Taunton, it was remarked by the English papers that no Englishman could have discharged the duty so satisfactorily. Mr. Lowell's discourse at Taunton was properly a critical estimate of Fielding's genius. But at Birmingham he spoke of the genius of Democracy in a strain which has not been surpassed by any one who ever treated the theme. Such a discourse was an event, and an event without precedent. A Foreign Minister stating, in the country to which he is accredited, the most radical political views, and asserting that they are the ultimate logical result of the political constitution of the country in which he speaks, and which repudi-