

## Contemporary Thought.

THE tenacious hold that education has upon the people of our country is manifest in various ways; perhaps nowhere more than by the numerous and frequent gifts of money and bequests in wills for permanent educational work. When love for a cause touches a man's pocket, it is neither transient nor shallow. George Bancroft, the historian, a native of Worcester, Mass., has signified his purpose to present to the city a fund of \$10,000 to form the "Aaron and Lueretia Bancroft Scholarship Fund," the income to be devoted to the liberal education of some one scholar selected from the citizens of Worcester.—*New York School Journal*.

SUPR. HIGBEE, of Pa., just before last Arbor Day mailed a circular to all county, city, and borough superintendents requesting them to make every effort possible to have the schools under their jurisdiction observe the day by planting trees, shrubbery, etc. The time is near when this important matter will be attended to by the superintendents of all our States. Arbor Day will become a fixed holiday, not of pleasure only, but of work, in beautifying the land. It would be well if Author's Day, as practised by the Cincinnati schools, could be united with Arbor Day, and many trees set out, christened the name of some distinguished author or actor. Some school-yards are full of such memorial trees.—*New York School Journal*.

MANY of our best teachers are beginning to realize that those studies that are most practical are sufficient for mental development. It is no longer necessary for pupils to study what is not practical for the sake of culture. We grant that culture as the means of obtaining knowledge is often more important than the knowledge itself. Life is too short to study all things. The most that we can do is to teach the studies that will be most important in such a manner as to develop and strengthen the mind. After the student has a practical education will be time enough to talk about the studies for culture. The more knowledge the better, but let it all be practical. Culture and utility go hand in hand. Make a boy a good business man and you make him a strong man.—*The Normal Index*.

THE biography of the present, not to mention the unworthy subjects which occasionally find their way into its realm, has become more or less diluted with egoistic puerilities, insipid sentimentalities, and not-to-be-exposed privacies. Its true and legitimate end of revealing for the benefit of the present and future public the universal and necessary truths of human nature as they have manifested themselves in those worthy of imitation, has become so lost sight of that the public is not now wholly satisfied unless it can know whether a man or woman who has written great books, painted fine pictures, or composed grand symphonies, was possessed of good table manners, had a clear complexion, or even loved pie!—*Elizabeth Porter Gould in "The Literary World."*

THE revision of the Old Testament is a literary success, but it has no pretensions to scholarly completeness. That is the general impression which the new version makes. There have been practi-

cally no alterations in the text, the variants of the Septuagint, even when undoubtedly superior, being relegated to the margin. The literary merits of the Authorized Version have been retained and on the whole enhanced, and its majestic rhythm has not been disturbed, and has even been allowed fuller play by the arrangement of the prose books in paragraphs, and of the poetical books in separate lines. The revisers are to be congratulated on the satisfactory result of their fifteen years' labor. There can be little doubt as to the wisdom of their decision in declining to make a new text of the Old Testament as the other company did with the New.—*The Athenaeum*.

No greater work is committed to mortals than the training up of a child for usefulness and happiness in a long life here, and an eternity of usefulness and happiness hereafter. Success can only be obtained by getting your own mind in sympathy with the mind of the child. You must know his wishes, desires, likes and dislikes, his aspirations and his weaknesses. You can then put yourself in a position to mould his mind, guide his will, and arouse a true and earnest aspiration for the best and the highest. The possibilities of his life are beyond our power to estimate. It was a beautiful baptismal benediction, that of the Arab priest: "My child, as you came into the world weeping, while all around you smiled, may you so live that you may leave the world smiling, while all around you weep."—*New York School Journal*.

THE article "Philology" (in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*) is divided into two sections, "The Science of Language in General" being discussed by Prof. W. D. Whitney, while the "Comparative Philology of the Aryan Languages" is treated by Prof. E. Sievers. Prof. Whitney is certainly the highest living authority on the science of language in general, and also possesses the faculty of clear and lively exposition, so that his section of the article exhibits the skill of a master in the arrangement, proportional treatment, and judicious compression of a vast and complex subject. He has established by terse and unanswerable arguments the conventional nature of speech and its imitative origin, and, in brief, upsets many of the fallacies which abound in the English books to which reference is made in the note on the literature of the subject. We have not space to develop the few minor points on which we venture to differ from him, but must content ourselves with bearing testimony to his admirable execution of an exceedingly difficult task. Prof. E. Sievers's contribution, on the other hand, though very learned, shows little sense of proportion.—*The Athenaeum*.

"AN undertaking, extraordinary even in these days of novelty and originality," says *The Pall Mall Gazette*, "has been proposed by a well-known capitalist, and, if the idea is well received, it may before long be carried out. The suggestion is to establish a Circulating Picture Loan Society, on the principle of Mudie's Library. In consideration of an annual payment, subscribers will be entitled to the loan of one or more pictures by living artists of every degree of talent, according to the amount of their subscription. These pictures would be changed from time to time—say every three or six months, as the subscriber's taste or the terms of his contract might dictate. A list of artists and their works available for circulation

would be published by the company periodically. It is claimed by the promoter that by means of his scheme the artistic taste of the middle classes throughout the country would be well served and educated as well, the inconvenience of paying down a lump sum for the acquisition of a picture would be obviated, a great impetus would be given to art, and a very necessary encouragement offered to artists of every grade."

THE human memory is capable of two distinct actions. It is possible so to commit the subject-matter of a lesson as to make a perfect recitation; to do this without reflection, and to do it in a very short time. This is the art of the waiter in a restaurant, who will take an order without a card for as many as thirty articles ordered by a party of six gentlemen, and not only bring all the articles, but assign to each guest his part of the order. But no permanent impression is made upon the brain-cells by this process. There is another method, involving repetition, reflection, and review, by which the substance of recitations becomes incorporated with the very structure of the brain, so that it would be impossible to eradicate it while life lasts. Many young people have a fatal facility of committing for an occasion. . . . If, then, you cannot learn to recite easily, but are compelled to study very hard, know that what you thus laboriously learn will, in form of substance, or both, be yours forever; and if you have facility of acquisition for immediate use without difficulty, be glad that you have this power, but do not let it seduce you from that more laborious and protracted operation of the mind which alone can enable you, in future years, to bring forth the results of your early studies.—*J. M. Buckley, LL.D., in Oats or Wild Oats. Common Sense for Young Men.*

A FACT which soon impresses itself on a teacher's mind is that there is a vast difference between the characters as well as the abilities of pupils. He learns to classify them according to their several characteristics. Thus one class will consist of the slow but sure, the naturally serious, possessing little enthusiasm, but an indomitable will; another will be composed of the bright and interesting boys who dash at their work with Celtic spirit, but who are the more easily daunted and require the more tender care. One type of boy has an innate love of real advancement; the ambition of another is to make a show in the world, to shine in society, to lead a butterfly existence. Some boys are almost consumed with a passion for producing sport; they are the clowns of the school-room; to their minds nothing is so important as a joke. Now, the teacher who sets his mind on eradicating any of these peculiarities must proceed with extreme caution lest he go too far. It is much easier to destroy than to build up; and very often a boy's peculiarities are in themselves harmless though they may require modification and sometimes restraint. The task of combining all of these various elements into a harmonious whole without destroying harmless individuality is as interesting as it is difficult. The forward must be placed under steady restraint, the diffident encouraged, the unambitious stimulated, and each individual case diagnosed and treated as bodily ailments are treated by the physician. This involves much psychological study, but it will be amply repaid by the results.—*The Critic (Halifax, N.S.).*